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ABSTRACT

This document consists of six issues of a newsletter entitled "Academy Update", extending from fall 1992 through fall 1995 (three years). This serial is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood (NAEYC) programs to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. The "Academy Update" supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals (including directors, validatory members, and commissioners involved in accreditation) with current information and feedback on the accreditation system. This document contains six issues of the "Academy Update." The feature articles of Volume 7, Number 1 are: "Pennsylvania School Board Recognizes Accreditation"; "New Policies Strengthen Accreditation"; Clarifying Misinformation about NAEYC and Accreditation"; and "Thoughts on Using Media in "Programs". The feature articles of Volume 8 Number 1 are: "American Business Collaboration Supports NAEYC Accreditation"; "Public and Private Funds for Accreditation Growing"; "Children's World Accredits 100 Centers"; and "Serving Children with Disabilities; Parents Speak". The feature articles of issue Volume 8 Number 2 are: "Chicago AEYC Receives $2.1 Million Accreditation Grant"; "New Tax Credits Mean Lower Taxes or Bigger Refunds"; "NAEYC Revokes Accreditation"; and "Cautions on Supervision". The feature articles of volume 9, number 1 include: "Companies Discover Quality Child Care is Good Business"; "Continuity of Relationships among Adults and Children is Essential for Quality;" "'Validation Procedures and Ethics' Generates Diverse Views from Directors, Validators"; and "Reaccreditation: A Tool for Continuous Quality Improvement." The feature articles of Volume 9, Number 2 are: "New Child Care Study Supports Accreditation"; "Diversity and Accreditation Standards: Congruent or Conflicting"; and "Foundation Supports Professional Development for Directors and Quality for Children. The feature articles for Volume 10, Number 1 are: "Major Corporations To Invest $100 Million in Dependent Care"; "10th Year of Accreditation Is a Time for Reflection"; and "Understanding Quality and the Cultural Context." (AP)

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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 7 Number 1 Fall 1992

The Academy Update
Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
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1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

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Pennsylvania School Board Recognizes Accreditation

NAEYC is proud to announce that the State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania passed a resolution on July 9, 1992, granting 2-year probationary approval for accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. In Pennsylvania, schools that are accredited by an agency recognized by the State Board of Education are not required to maintain a Board of Private Academic Schools license (for the part of their program that would normally be required to be licensed by the Board of Education). Please note that this resolution by the Pennsylvania Board of Education does not affect any program licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. All child care programs must maintain their license when they become accredited. This act only affects those components of a program—nursery schools and kindergartens—that are licensed by the Board of Private Academic Schools.

What this means for early childhood programs in Pennsylvania is that any program licensed by the Board of Private Academic Schools which has achieved NAEYC accreditation, or does achieve it in the future, has the option when their Private Academic School license is up for renewal to maintain their license or choose not to renew it as long as they remain accredited by NAEYC. This resolution was approved contingent on NAEYC's assurance that those accredited programs that are now exempt from licensing by the Board of Private Academic Schools would continue to meet the standards governing private academic schools in Pennsylvania. Therefore, programs that take advantage of this opportunity will be considered "exempt" from this license and will be required to submit certification to the Academy that they comply with the Pennsylvania standards when they seek reaccreditation by NAEYC. This policy is in keeping with eligibility requirements for accreditation (see page 1 and 2 of *Accreditation Criteria & Procedures* and criterion **H-1**, where such compliance would be reported in the Program Description). This new policy will result in considerable financial savings for those eligible programs.

By its action in July, the Pennsylvania Board of Education recognized the validity of NAEYC's accreditation process for ensuring high quality early childhood programs as well as the need for an accrediting process that is specifically designed for educational programs for young children. NAEYC is grateful to the Pennsylvania Board of Education for this recognition. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to leaders of the Pennsylvania AEYC through whose advocacy efforts this action was made possible—Marsha Poster, Penn-AEYC President; and Jane Allis, Penn-AEYC Vice President for Advocacy.

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New Policies Strengthen Accreditation

The NAEYC Governing Board approved two important modifications to accreditation policies at its meeting in July 1992. These policy changes strengthen the ability of the accreditation system to ensure continued compliance among accredited programs as well as to provide incentives to programs to remain accredited. The policy changes are (1) the option to grant a 4-year accreditation to programs on their second reaccreditation under specified circumstances and (2) the option to conduct an unannounced visit in response to a serious complaint about an accredited program.

Granting a 4-year tenure under special circumstances

The Academy now has a group of programs that have been reaccredited twice. These programs have gone through the accreditation process a total of three times. On a regular basis, we receive requests from these programs for some sort of special treatment and/or an extension of the tenure of accreditation. The NAEYC Governing Board agreed that staff have the option of granting an automatic extension (4 years of accreditation instead of 3) after the second reaccreditation of a program that has the same director, a stable staff, a high level of compliance with the Criteria, and has not had complaints or has not had difficulty achieving accreditation (never been deferred). Programs receiving this automatic extension would need to complete annual reports, and if a significant change occurred such as a change in director or high rate of staff turnover, the program would be required to have a visit sooner.

Maintaining the integrity of the system by responding to serious complaints

The Academy Advisory Panel reviewed the Academy complaint procedures and determined that the procedures are basically sound and serve us well. To summarize complaint procedures: the responsibility for substantiating a complaint lies with the complainant; all avenues of recourse must have been exhausted locally prior to action by the Academy (in other words, the parent should talk to the director and try to resolve the concern before ever coming to us); the complaint must be in writing; the Academy will keep the complainant confidential if requested and possible; action is only taken on complaints that would affect the accreditation status of the program; the program has an opportunity to respond; and the Academy reserves the right to require a revisit.

Recently, the staff have become concerned about the possibility of programs' failing to maintain compliance with ratios that were observed during accreditation (especially in states where licensing permits far greater numbers than accreditation). We have had at least two complaints against accredited programs about ratios in excess of the numbers reported during their visit. Of course, we have the right to require a revisit, but if the program is informed of the date of the visit in advance, it seems possible that we may not observe the true situation. Therefore, the Board approved a policy that permits the Academy to conduct an unannounced visit in response to a complaint. Strictly speaking, the visit would not be unannounced. The Academy would follow all regular complaint procedures, notifying the program of the complaint and the fact that the Academy may conduct an unannounced visit; the program would not be notified of the date of the potential visit in advance. From our experience, it is clear that this procedure would only be necessary on very rare occasions. This policy does not alter the nature of the accreditation system, but this policy protects the system and other accredited programs from those rare individuals who would abuse our trust.

NAEYC Is Moving!

Starting January 1, 1993, you should use the following address when sending Academy materials to NAEYC—

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
NAEYC
1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

The telephone numbers will remain the same—202-232-8777 and 800-424-2460.

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Clarifying Misinformation about NAEYC and Accreditation

Several months ago, the *Education Reporter*, a newsletter published by the Eagle Forum, included an attack on NAEYC's book, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*, written by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force. The article was highly inflammatory and inaccurate, quoting the author out of context and misrepresenting the contents of the publication as "anti-Christian." The article has been disseminated in some areas of the country and used by some people to discredit NAEYC's accreditation system. Occasionally a director calls or writes us inquiring about accreditation policies relevant to an anti-bias curriculum. This article provides accurate information about accreditation requirements and anti-bias curricula. Please call or write Sue Bredekamp or Marilyn Smith at NAEYC if you wish additional clarification.

We need resources to educate

NAEYC's *Anti-Bias Curriculum* is an important tool for educating adults who want to help children develop positive self-esteem and resist developing the biases that permeate our society. The book provides suggestions for teachers to support children of different races, religions, cultures, genders, family backgrounds, economic circumstances, and handicapping conditions. The message of the book is very much in keeping with the message of the U.S. Constitution—fair and equal treatment for all people regardless of their diversity. Many feel that this message is very much in keeping with the message of the Bible—love one another, and do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Unfortunately, on almost a daily basis we are reminded how much bias continues to affect our society and how it hurts children. For example, during a recent validation visit, a validator observed a young boy start to cry while the class was making Father's Day cards. The child explained to his teacher that he did not have a father. The teacher's response? "Make a card anyway." We also receive complaints from parents of various religious backgrounds and races about how they have been treated in accredited programs. The situations are rarely ones about which we could take action, but they are disturbing. An African American mother was offended by a Confederate flag in a classroom. Her son, the only African American child in the school, was told by his classmates that he had funny hair and that he was only going to be a robber when he grew up. We relate these incidents from among many more that could be cited to illustrate the enormous need for resources like *Anti-Bias Curriculum* and NAEYC's recent publication, a revised edition of *Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity With Young Children* by Bonnie Neugebauer.

What NAEYC is trying to accomplish

NAEYC's mission is to act on behalf of the needs and interests of all young children. Because our mission encompasses serving all children, we provide resources and services that will assist teachers in working with all children. For example, the American Bar Association estimates that there are 8 to 10 million children growing up in gay and lesbian households. The *Anti-Bias Curriculum* and any other NAEYC resources that address this topic were not written to advocate alternative life styles or to indoctrinate children in these life styles, but to help teachers be sensitive to and not react negatively toward or discriminate against these children in their programs.

What the Criteria require of programs seeking accreditation

Programs seeking accreditation are only asked to comply with the official Criteria for accreditation, not with information contained in the more than 100 books that NAEYC publishes. The accreditation Criteria do not require that programs provide an anti-bias curriculum. The Criteria do require that staff "treat children of all races, religions, family backgrounds, and cultures with equal respect and consideration" and provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials that respect cultural diversity." The book, *Anti-Bias Curriculum* is listed as a resource to help implement this criterion, not as a requirement for accreditation. Other books are referenced throughout the Criteria as resources.

Approximately 25% of NAEYC accredited programs are church-related; therefore, it is clear that Christian programs are able to meet accreditation standards and are not asked to do anything that they consider "un-Christian." We hope this clarifies our position and corrects the false information contained in the *Education Reporter* article.

Connecticut Department of Education Supports Accreditation of Programs for Children with Disabilities

In the spring of 1992, the Connecticut State Department of Education launched an initiative to support NAEYC accreditation for programs serving 3- through 5-year-old children with disabilities. The Department received applications from 41 local school districts that represent 53 programs (37 preschool and 16 kindergarten) and a total of 2,673 children! The majority of programs are school-based. However, districts also applied on behalf of two Head Start programs, two Family Resource Centers, and eight community-based child care programs.

The Department will use preschool special education funds (Section 619 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act) to pay for accreditation fees. The regional Early Childhood Network, also funded by the Connecticut Department of Education, will be available to provide consultation to these programs on request. Connecticut plans to continue this initiative on an annual basis.

The initiative was based on two identified needs. First, results from a school district needs assessment survey indicated that districts were interested in conducting program evaluation. Second, it was apparent that programs serving preschool and kindergarten children with special needs needed to more consistently reflect developmentally appropriate curricula and practices. In reviewing the literature on program evaluation and comparing it to the accreditation process, it was discovered that accreditation, in essence, is program evaluation.

The state perceived the following advantages of using accreditation as program evaluation: a plan to improve the program is built into the system; a number of sources of information and a variety of stakeholders are involved in providing input into the evaluation; because stakeholders are involved in the process, they will be more committed to changing what needs to be changed; accreditation is a cost efficient evaluation tool; and NAEYC accreditation is recognized as a valid approval system.

Accreditation can ensure that a program meets the national standards for early childhood programs for all children, but may not be sufficient alone to ensure the total quality of a program for a child with a disability. Special techniques and/or adaptations to the curriculum, routines, materials, and equipment may need to be used. An accredited program will represent a high quality, normalized framework in which to carry out a child's special program.

Questions about Connecticut's initiative can be addressed to Elizabeth Aschenbrenner at 203-455-0707 or Kay Halverson at 203-566-5670.

NAEYC Releases New Resources!

#225 *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children*, Volume 1 $7

Don't miss NAEYC's latest book to assist you in your work with young children. *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children*, Volume 1 is edited by Sue Bredekamp and Teresa Rosegrant. The book is the first part of a two-volume series designed to assist early childhood professionals in applying the Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment developed by NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education. Volume 1 addresses reaching potentials for all children including children from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities.

#763 *Guidelines for the Productive Employment of Older Adults in Child Care* $3

These guidelines, prepared by Sally M. Newman, Karen Vander Ven, and Christopher R. Ward, of Generations Together, were designed to ensure appropriate placement, orientation, training and supervision, and working conditions for older adults employed in early childhood programs.

NAEYC Reviews DAP

NAEYC's influential position statements on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) are currently undergoing review and comment. Suggestions for changes, revisions, additions, and any other comments should be sent in writing to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters by **March 1.** Because so many programs seeking accreditation use DAP materials as resources, staff and directors of accredited programs can provide important feedback on needed revisions. All position statements of NAEYC are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and reflect current research and thinking.

New Jersey Honors Directors

The Office of Child Care Development in the New Jersey Department of Human Services observed the Week of the Young Child last spring by holding a reception to honor the directors of accredited programs in New Jersey. Directors were able to bring a guest, such as a board member or head teacher. They were joined by accredited family child care providers, members of the Child Care Advisory Council, and state representatives. Commissioner Alan J. Gibbs presented certificates of recognition. Aletha Wright is Director of the Office of Child Care Development in Trenton, New Jersey.

Upcoming Validator Trainings Have Been Scheduled

The following trainings are planned for individuals who are interested in serving as validators and for individuals who have been previously trained but need to be refreshed on procedures:

January TBA—Minnesota

February 6—Tucson, Arizona

March 10—Hilton Head, SC, National Coalition for Campus Child Care

March TBA—Nebraska

March 18—Crystal City, VA, VAECE

April 3—Fargo, ND, NDAEYC

April 14—Indianapolis, IN, Midwest AEYC

April 22—Stamford, CT, NE-AEYC

Other trainings will be planned in response to need for validators in various areas. If you wish to participate in any of these trainings, or to apply to be a validator, request an application from the Academy.

Minnesota Legislature Provides Funds for Accreditation

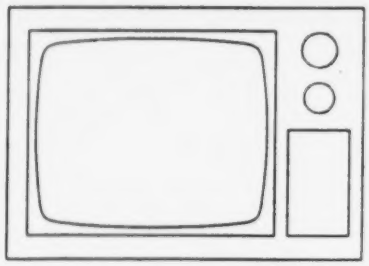
In Minnesota, during the 1991 Legislative Session, $100,000 was allocated for accreditation incentives for child care centers. A statewide advisory committee reviewed proposals and recommended funding several projects. Minnesota AEYC received funding to design and deliver a statewide support system for child care centers seeking accreditation which includes funding for a project coordinator, training consultants to facilitate and to give individual technical assistance to centers, grants to help centers meet accreditation Criteria areas, and funds for accreditation fees. The Catholic Education Center will train staff and develop resources for child care centers in the accreditation process in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Southside Child Care Committee received funds to strengthen organizational and business skills of directors in programs seeking accreditation in the inner city of Minneapolis. The Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council, Inc., plans to upgrade staff qualifications in West Central Minnesota to meet accreditation Criteria. The grant period is September 1, 1992 through June 30, 1993.

Thanks to Barbara O'Sullivan from the Minnesota Department of Human Services for keeping us informed of this exciting development in her state. If your state or community has an initiative to support NAEYC accreditation, please let us know.

STATES WITH UPCOMING VALIDATOR TRAININGS

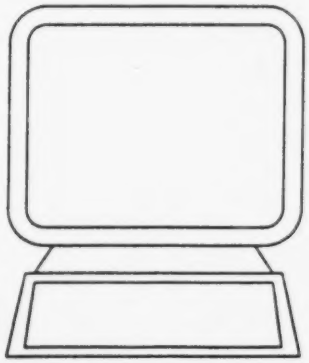
(see schedule at left)

Thoughts on Using Media in Programs



New Criterion —B-6— Is Clarified

The revised accreditation Criteria include a new criterion (B-6) that addresses the appropriate use of media. This criterion is intended to define the parameters within which media are used in programs, not to require that programs use media. When the Program Description is reprinted, this criterion will include an option to check "Not Applicable." Because the NA option is not currently available in all the materials, directors and validators should feel free to write in "NA" in situations where no media are used such as in infant classrooms or where programs choose not to use media. If a program chooses not to use media, no explanation is necessary.



During the reaccreditation visit to Perry-Kay Nursery School and Kindergarten in Southfield, Michigan, the question about validating B-6—use of media—arose. The program sent the Academy the following explanation which they also send to parents.

Why Some Media are NOT Highlighted in Our Program

by Kay Koulouras

In our high tech world, it is not unusual for adults to question why videos, television, and computers are not used in our Perry-Kay classrooms. It might further be indicated that young children enjoy and learn from such media. There is no question that such equipment for learning is here to stay and already has made an impact in our lives as it will continue to do so in the future.

A VCR, television, and computers are housed in our center and making them available to children is not a problem. However, it is our philosophy that the most effective mode of learning during these early years is and should be through direct human interaction. We, therefore, purposely select to use human exchanges and interactions for every opportunity available for learning in lieu of media. Given the limited time young children actually spend with adults in direct interaction, we feel justified in offering maximum opportunities. Videos, televisions, and computers will serve as extensions of learning and increase in use in schools and at home as children grow. Children's ultimate successful use of media will not be thwarted if time with such media is not included during preschool and kindergarten. Limiting time with positive, warm, human interaction, on the other hand, is viewed as a hindrance to positive development.

Panel Studies Technology

NAEYC's Panel on Technology and Children is charged to examine the impact of technology (including but not limited to computers, videotape, and interactive technology) on young children and the early childhood field, in order to develop guidelines and/or a position statement specifying (1) the appropriate use of technology in programs; (2) the use of technology for classroom management, record-keeping, documentation; (3) the equitable distribution of and access to technology; (4) the implications of technology for professional development; and (5) considerations regarding the development of culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate software.

The Technology Panel welcomes the input of NAEYC members, especially directors of accredited programs. Please send your comments or suggestions on any aspect of this work to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters.

Food for thought . . .

Following is an excerpt from a letter sent by a director to the Academy. The points she makes are important food for thought for all of us as we interpret the Criteria.

Dear Academy:

As the Director of a program which has recently completed its validation visit, I feel the need to share some of my feelings as well as those of our preschool staff. The year-long self-study process was a wonderful experience for our staff. It gave us some structure and the tools for making some adjustments, as well as reassuring us that we were indeed doing a very good job of providing a quality developmental program.

However, after my discussion with the validators of the validated and non-validated criteria on the Program Description, we found ourselves feeling rather depressed. We are a high quality, developmentally appropriate program and the staff and I pride ourselves on the services and experiences we give the needy children in our community.

One of my main goals this year has been to provide extensive in-service and staff development on a variety of early childhood topics. Many of those sessions were devoted to enhancing children's language development. It amazes me that the validators chose not to validate three language-related criteria (**A-3b, A-11,** and **B-7d**) and used one situation as the example for two of those criteria. The validators may have observed a "missed opportunity for language development," but they also must have observed many opportunities that were expanded, especially since the majority of our families are transitioning from monolingual Spanish to bilingual English and our staff is so aware of the importance of their language development.

Another area that was not validated was the multicultural integration of our classrooms, and again this is an area that we feel is outstanding in our program. We acknowledge cultural diversity continuously by constant use of the Spanish language, and respect for the families' traditions and customs through music, food, art, and books at each of our centers.

Our program brings the parents into the classroom daily to interact with the students and help in the classroom. What better way to integrate culture into our daily schedule. It is my staff's decision not to display a lot of Mexican items such as sarapes and a tortilla press (as suggested by a validator) because it is "tourist" curriculum. My staff are all Hispanic, many natives of Mexico, and one teacher summed it up by saying, "I am Mexican and I certainly respect my culture, but I don't have or want those things in my house. They are very stereotyping." Our respect for cultural diversity is also continued through our weekly home visits.

Other non-validated criteria that really disturbed us dealt with the balance of teacher directed vs. child directed activities as well as large and small group activities (**B-4e, B-7h, B-9**). We realize that there needs to be a balance and we feel that this is another of our strengths. However, our children are extremely "at risk." Many come from unstructured, dysfunctional homes. They need and like this structure. They feel safe and secure here. Only a part of our day is teacher-directed. The children have many, many choices and they almost always direct what happens in small group as well as large group.

—A Concerned Director

Validators—Take Note!

As always, we wish to thank the hundreds of committed early childhood professionals who serve as validators for the accreditation system. Without your professional contribution, the accreditation system would not be possible.

- To remind validators of important validation procedures, the Academy sends a refresher videotape, *Preparing for a Validation Visit*. We do have a limited supply of these videos, so please return the video after viewing it in preparation for a visit.
- Please note that it is not necessary to interview each teacher about every observed criterion. The purpose of the teacher interview is to obtain information about criteria that you were unable to observe during the visit, not to discuss the entire observation. To do so is too time consuming and takes the teachers away from the children for too long.
- When validating large centers, the decision rules for validating observable criteria apply for more than seven groups.

Academy Lapel Pins Make Perfect Holiday Gifts for Staff

The green and gold Academy lapel pin (shown enlarged here) is available to accredited programs for $2.00 per pin. To order, please contact the Academy staff. You will need to use your accredited program code number when you place your order.

Keep Track of Immunizations

A new tool, the **Immunization Dose Counter**, was designed by Dr. Susan Aronson to help program personnel determine when children are overdue for recommended immunizations. To obtain a free immunization dose counter, send a self-addressed, 9 x 12" stamped, envelope with 52¢ postage to NAEYC, Box IDC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

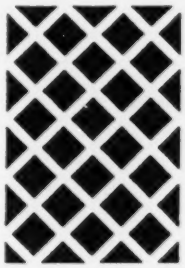
Stay Tuned for Results of Benefits Survey

A recent issue of *The Academy Update* contained a survey about benefits offered by programs. More than 150 responses were received. Patti Levine, Director of the San Diego County Employees' Child Care Center, requested information from the Academy about benefits and we thought of the survey as a strategy for answering her question. Needless to say, we were all somewhat overwhelmed by the detailed responses we received. An intern at NAEYC is currently working on analyzing the data and will prepare a report. The results will be reported in a future issue of *The Update*. We wish to thank all of you who took the time to respond to the survey.

Deadline Has Passed for New Materials

September 30, 1992 was the deadline to request a validation visit using self-study materials that were purchased prior to July 1991. Not surprisingly, hundreds of programs sent in their requests for visits. Due to unprecedented demand, holidays, and fall conferences, these validation requests will take longer to arrange than usual. Directors who would prefer visits after the holidays may exercise this option. All programs involved in self-study or requesting visits should now use the revised self-study materials. These materials have publication dates of 1991 or later.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The early childhood profession comes together again . . .

1993 Conference
June 2–5
Minneapolis, Minnesota

For more information, contact the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 8 Number 1 Fall 1993

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

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NAEYC Completes Transitions

THE LAST YEAR was a year of transitions for the Academy. Not only did we complete the transition to the revised accreditation materials, but we also relocated to our new headquarters at 1509 16th Street, N.W.

The combination of the September 1992 deadline for the use of old self-study materials and the January 1993 move from NAEYC's home of 20 years on Connecticut Avenue resulted in an unprecedented delay of service for some programs and publication of only one issue of *The Academy Update*. The move also required forwarding of mail from the old address which contributed to delays in service. We apologize for any inconvenience these delays may have caused and appreciate the patience exhibited by those individuals whose programs were affected.

The transition is now complete. We are committed to providing high quality, timely service. Orders for in-stock self-study materials are filled within a few days. Validation visits are arranged in all areas of the country within the projected 30 working days.

To ensure timely service in the future, please correct NAEYC's address in self-study materials that you plan to use, especially in the Program Description. Validators, please check that validated Program Descriptions are mailed to the correct address.

American Business Collaboration Supports NAEYC Accreditation

THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COLLABORATION FOR QUALITY DEPENDENT CARE, the largest business collaboration in U.S. history, celebrated its first anniversary in September and is already funding 285 initiatives in 44 communities in 25 states and the District of Columbia. Spearheaded by 11 of the largest corporations in the nation, the American Business Collaboration is providing $26.3 million toward its goal of increasing the supply and enhancing the quality of child and elder care programs throughout the country. Many initiatives include support for NAEYC accreditation.

Ellen Galinsky, former NAEYC president and Co-President of Families and Work Institute in New York, states, "The impact of the Collaboration on child and elder care has been immense. These corporations have become a real voice for quality in their communities."

Continued on page 2

NAEYC Joins *ATLIS* Network and Goes On-Line!

NAEYC is pleased to announce its new partnership with *ATLIS*℠, the America Tomorrow Leadership Information Service. *ATLIS* uses computer technology and a national electronic network to connect education, community, and business leaders with information relevant to their professional needs.

Through this network, early childhood professionals will have a powerful tool to gather information and collaborate on problems and their solutions. As one of the main information providers for the *ATLIS* early childhood hub, NAEYC will have its own Association database with information specific to NAEYC members. In addition to learning about current NAEYC issues, users will also be able to get information from other associations on the network, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Head Start Association. This interactive network allows users to discuss professional issues and viewpoints with each other via the bulletin board. New ideas, community success stories, professional development topics, the Full Cost of Quality campaign, accreditation concerns, and more—can be addressed through *ATLIS*.

The network, linked with Prodigy Business Services, is easy to learn and easy to use at one low annual cost—$159 for NAEYC members who join by December 31, 1993 ($179 regularly). The more people who take advantage of this service, the better the professional collaboration. All you need to get started are a personal computer and a modem!

For more information on how to join the *ATLIS* network, call 800-456-8881.

Public and Private Funds for Accreditation Growing

AT&T's Family Care Development Fund which was already providing support for initial accreditation fees now provides scholarships to programs that are going through reaccreditation. Started in July 1991, the Fund's accreditation scholarship program pays accreditation fees for programs that serve at least one AT&T family. This change in policy demonstrates AT&T's awareness of the need to maintain high quality through reaccreditation.

Arizona's ***Success by 6,*** a collaborative intervention program for at-risk children, is celebrating the 1-year anniversary of its Child Care Improvement Project. The project, sponsored by the Honeywell Foundation and the Arizona Department of Health Services, was created to assist early childhood programs serving at-risk children by providing funds for the centers to pursue accreditation and by facilitating staff training.

The United Way of Allegheny County, PA, recently approved a motion to provide funds for accreditation to programs under its jurisdiction. In addition to paying fees for self-study materials, funds will be available to programs for the purchase of equipment and materials that will help them to comply with the Criteria.

The District of Columbia Office of Early Childhood Development administers a scholarship program in conjunction with the Washington, D.C., AEYC that provides 50% of the accreditation fees to eligible area centers. In addition to dispensing funds, the OECD has also equipped its resource center with materials on accreditation.

Hats Off to Peggy!

The Academy staff bids fond farewell to longtime accreditation coordinator, Peggy Quinn. After 6 years of outstanding service to NAEYC, Peggy is retiring November 15. She and her husband, Jarus, will soon relocate to California. Peggy's work was instrumental in establishing the high standards of professionalism that we strive for in our accreditation system. Although we will all miss seeing Peggy on a daily basis, we are fortunate that our relationship with her does not end, but is simply transformed. Peggy will continue to serve NAEYC and the early childhood profession as a validator, commissioner, and validator trainer. Accolades and best wishes to Peggy!

BUSINESS *continued from page 1*

The Collaboration was established by 137 businesses and public/private sector organizations. "We can accomplish more by working together than by working alone," agreed the chief executive officers of 11 major companies: Allstate Insurance Co., American Express, Amoco Corp., AT&T, Eastman Kodak Co., Exxon Corp., IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Motorola, The Travelers, and Xerox. Nine other corporations have joined since the initiative was announced. The entire project is being managed by Work/Family Directions, a Boston-based, national dependent care consultation firm.

The American Business Collaboration is supporting special accreditation initiatives in Phoenix, AZ; Santa Clara, CA; Stamford, CT; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN; New Jersey; Rochester, NY; and Raleigh-Durham, NC.

Children's World Accredits 100 Centers

Children's World Learning Centers this summer surpassed a milestone of accrediting more than 100 centers by NAEYC. To celebrate this achievement the company held a national celebration at the Pentagon Child Development Center, one of the NAEYC accredited Children's World centers.

The ceremony at the Pentagon on August 10 featured presentations by Duane Larson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's World; Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder; Alma Powell, wife of General Colin Powell; Marianne Neifert, the pediatrician and columnist better known as "Dr. Mom"; and Barbara Willer, NAEYC Public Affairs Director. Excerpts from the ceremony follow:

Duane Larson, Children's World President: "We are here to salute all early childhood educators who have undertaken the National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation process. This "torch for excellence" represents nationally recognized standards of quality that all children across America deserve. We believe those dedicated to early childhood education, working in concert with NAEYC, can act to ensure quality education and care for all families.

Children's World Learning Centers is proud of our commitment to NAEYC accreditation since the process began in 1985. This celebration marks a milestone for us as we surpass accreditation of 100 Children's World Learning Centers. This is more than a milestone, however; it is a recognition of the need to raise the awareness of the importance of consistent national standards in early childhood care and education. These issues are important to our nation's present and future and should be making headlines each and every day. . . .

Today, most early childhood education programs use their state's minimum licensing regulations as their quality benchmark. As President of Children's World Learning Centers, I've supported our dedicated professionals nationwide in their efforts to achieve NAEYC accreditation at each of our centers across the country. Overseeing more than 500 locations and 13,000 teachers and teachers aides who care for over 70,000 children daily is, in some ways, like operating an education system in a large city. This has given me a clear perspective on the challenges our educators and families face every day. The NAEYC accreditation process assists educators and families in working as a team to address each challenge in order to offer consistent high quality education and care.

Since the inception of NAEYC accreditation, Children's World has worked to implement these standards throughout our entire organization. We are proud to say that the result of this effort is that Children's World to date has 117 NAEYC-accredited centers nationwide. This is important because the process of accreditation has many benefits to children and their families, as well as to early childhood professionals. Through accreditation, staff enhance professional skills to help children feel successful, increase self-esteem, and learn to communicate more effectively with both their peers and adults. Our experience shows that families who use accredited centers are more involved in activities related to the center and their child's education. This involvement gives parents confidence and a feeling of security about their child's daily experiences."

Children's World®
LEARNING CENTERS®

Mrs. Colin Powell: "As a service wife, I know firsthand how important available child care is to support military operations, and as a mother and a grandmother I know how important quality care is for the child and the parent. Accredited centers provide both."

Marianne Neifert, "Dr. Mom": "During the hectic, stress-filled years that I was a student, intern, resident, and young practicing physician, my husband and I also were raising 5 small children. In a dozen years, we used 16 different child care arrangements. . . . My family's past experience doesn't have to continue as other parents' present reality. . . . Choosing an accredited program empowers families to make informed choices about child care quality that weren't available to me 25 years ago. Pediatricians and other health professionals need to be made aware of the distinctions between minimal regulations for operation and model accreditation standards. They also need to be prepared to discuss child care arrangements at regular check-ups."

Congratulations to Children's World Learning Centers on this impressive accomplishment.

Serving Children with Disabilities; Parents Speak

Dear NAEYC:

We are writing to express our sincere gratitude and elation at our son's success this year as a participant in a typical preschool program at Kensington Day Care in Silver Spring, Maryland. Kensington Day Care recently received accreditation from NAEYC and we are very proud to be a part of this progressive educational and day care environment.

As President of the Montgomery County Chapter of Parents of Children with Down Syndrome (PODS), we understand that inclusive education has become a national trend in schools across the continent largely supported by a number of education systems and many national disability organizations. It is so rewarding for our son to be part of this movement at the age of five.

As parents, we would like to share a brief background about our son. On March 2, 1987, we gave birth to a beautiful baby boy who happened to have Down Syndrome. For the next five years we, his parents and a team of professionals, followed a heavy regimen of physical, occupational, speech, and cognitive therapies. At six months old, Christopher was enrolled in the Montgomery County Preschool Education Program. He stayed in segregated special education classes for four years, in self-contained classrooms.

As we learned more about Down Syndrome and more about who our son Christopher really was, we realized he deserved the same opportunities in life that his siblings had by birthright. Our vision for him was that one day, with the support of his friends and family, he would be a contributing member of our community, with a place to work and live, similar to our vision for our other children. We took a risk; we elected to remove him from the protection and seclusion of special education.

However, we very much wanted him to be challenged to learn to do his best, reach his potential, and have as many of the same opportunities as other five-year-olds. And so began our search for the place that would offer Chris this opportunity. We found such a place at Kensington Day Care in Silver Spring, Maryland.

From the first day we met with the Director, Susan Bruch, we listened as she explained the philosophy of the center; then we observed classes and found that the children were happy, interacting with one another, learning about who they are and their world around them. We learned about the program's developmental curriculum where individual needs and interests of each child were addressed. This was exactly what we were looking for: a place for Chris to learn from typical role models, to learn to be curious and explore his environment under the guidance of nurturing teachers and staff willing to encourage Christopher to be his best. We found a place which offered structure, yet gave opportunities for choices to be made.

Ms. Bruch was very positive about the idea of having Chris and more important, she was willing to work with us, his Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and any specialist that Chris might need during the year. She gave us a sense of hope and reinforced our belief that Chris DID belong as much as any other child. Due to this positive welcoming and the courageous and dynamic leadership in the classroom, this has been a year of great successes for Chris!

Chris has far surpassed the expectations on his IEP, our own goals for him, and he continues to accomplish new feats every day. We realize that Chris has continued to gain a positive sense of self-esteem when teachers and peers expect him to be his best. He is challenged to develop his abilities in ways that have meaning to his life, like climbing on all the outdoor equipment, or hiking over rocks on a field trip (strengthens upper body muscles, a physical therapy goal on his IEP). Manipulating flannel board materials, pouring his own juice, turning on water to wash his own hands meet the occupational goals in fine-motor skills and self-help goals. In every area from cognitive to social-emotional to self-help, goals have been reached, surpassed and Chris continues to progress.

Chris was practically non-verbal in September of 1992. He relied primarily on sign language and gestures. His sign book (a homemade binder of over 100 signs) accompanied him everywhere. Due to a very patient teaching team who willingly learned this language, and his classmates who also eagerly learned, Chris was comfortable with using the primary language known to him. Five months later, he actively chooses to speak words strung together sometimes even without the aid of signs. Clearly, this is due to teacher and peer example in a very language-enriched environment.

Together with his teacher, Kerstin Milauskis, we have kept a journal of his progress that documents every area of development. Kerstin documents each goal, each accomplishment, new idea, everything Chris learns that can be measured! Chris is living proof that this inclusive environment is the best place for him. KDC has given him an opportunity to experience a part of life that has opened doors to a new world for him. But Chris has not been the only one to gain from this experience. Several parents have commented about the lessons their own children learn from Chris: patience, endurance, kindness, friendship, and even a second language in sign.

Most of all, Chris has learned about life from the typical preschool perspec-

PARENTS *continued from page 4*

tive. He has learned with his peers, from participating in the learning experience. He has developed friendships and a sense of belonging. This is most important for each of our children to understand if we want them to one day contribute in their community; they must first believe they belong.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our appreciation for a model program at Kensington Day Care. Thank you for the loving people who gave Chris the chance. We will continue to try to make more opportunities available for Chris. As Kerstin teaches Chris, we too learn to encourage him to explore, make choices, and accept responsibility in life. These are truly the goals of education. Thank you again.

Theresa and Mark Divita

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Commissioners Meet President Clinton!

Commissioners volunteer their time for the Academy but that does not mean that there are no rewards. After a challenging day of decision making at the June 25 and 26 Commission meeting, at which 404 programs were considered, the commissioners had the opportunity to shake President Clinton's hand in front of NAEYC Headquarters.

The President and Mrs. Clinton were on their way out of the Foundry Methodist Church across the street from NAEYC just as the commissioners were breaking for lunch. Thanks to the resourcefulness of the Academy's Assistant Director, Saundra Gilbert, the President strolled over from his limousine and took time to greet the excited commissioners. Luckily a few commissioners had cameras to record this very special event.

Special Educators Review Criteria

Some members of NAEYC who also belong to DEC—the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children—would like to hear from you if you serve children with special needs and have participated in the NAEYC accreditation process. The members are the DEC Task Force on Linkages with NAEYC. Their plans are to work toward a common understanding of good early childhood practices for children regardless of abilities or disabilities. They would like to hear from you whether your involvement with children with special needs is informal (you have accepted children without any special support) or formal (you are in collaboration with a special education or early intervention program, or you are a special education or early intervention provider).

Write and tell them how the accreditation process addressed (or failed to address) best practices regarding integration and children with special needs, and how specific criteria did or did not help staff focus on improved practices for integration/inclusion of children with special needs. Please address these questions, or any other related issues, to Karen Diamond, Department of Child Development & Family Studies, 1367 CDFS Bldg., Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN 47907-1267.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the DEC may call Barbara Smith or Joan Ramsey at 412-937-5430.

ECCN Recognition for Congregation-Related Programs

by Carolyn Van Donselaar

Carolyn Van Donselaar is an NAEYC Academy commissioner and validator. She is the director of The Second Christian Reformed Church's Community Preschool in Denver, CO.

Six years ago, the church-related center that I direct was accredited by NAEYC. Accreditation gave staff, parents, and church members real pride in our preschool programs.

Soon after we received accreditation, we participated in a national pilot project of the Ecumenical Child Care Network (ECCN). ECCN is an interfaith organization whose members are mostly early childhood educators who work with programs housed in churches and synagogues. Several ECCN leaders, working with NAEYC, developed a self-study specifically for church-related early childhood programs.

The self-study complements NAEYC's accreditation process. A team of program staff and members of the host congregation examines the relationships that so frequently challenge even accredited programs housed in churches and synagogues.

Participation in this additional self-study was a wonderful experience for the preschool board and congregation. Despite their pride in our accreditation, church members had been observers rather than participants in that process. Their enthusiasm for the ECCN self-study and the way it opened communication between the congregation and child care programs was amazing.

A year later in 1991, when the ECCN self-study guide was published by NAEYC as *Congregations and Child Care*, and the ECCN recognition system was formalized, our center became one of the

Continued on page 6

ECCN *continued from page 5*

first five programs in the nation to be awarded ECCN recognition.

I wish we had such a tool earlier when our preschool and church had a hard time communicating and finding a common mission. While we worked out our problems verbally at the time, the self-study encourages us to put our purpose, policies, and practices in writing. Now the church leaders and preschool staff understand each other better, and good communication is assured despite changes in board, church, and preschool staff.

ECCN's self-study guides a team of church and child care leaders to examine five important areas vital to a healthy relationship. First, the self-study team discusses its concept of ministry and mission and arrives at a common vision. If the program's goal is to serve "all of God's children" and the congregational leaders' goal is increasing membership, problems are inevitable.

Second, the self-study team defines and clarifies the decision-making structure for its weekday ministries. Whether the program is part of the church or is independent using space in the building, questions about who makes which decisions must be answered to everyone's satisfaction. Third, the team develops plans that ensure a high quality, developmentally appropriate program, a good way to "hold up" Academy Criteria to congregational leaders. Fourth, the team creates a system for ongoing communication and understanding between the congregation and program concerning shared space and equipment. Written agreements can work miracles. Finally, the team agrees about how financial decisions are made and responsibilities shared, answering the vital questions of where the money comes from and where it goes.

ECCN's *Congregations and Child Care* is infused with an anti-bias perspective and an affirmation of the diversity of our world. These principles influence not only our preschool program but the church's outlook as well. We continue to work together to find new ways to affirm our participation in a diverse neighborhood.

For church-related programs, combining NAEYC's accreditation with ECCN's recognition process brings great rewards and satisfaction for staff, parents, and congregational leaders and members. In my own center, and in the programs of other churches and synagogues with which I have worked as an ECCN mentor, *Congregations and Child Care* has been an excellent tool for developing and maintaining high quality programs.

To learn more about the ECCN recognition program, contact the ECCN National Council on Recognition, 1580 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, IL 60068-1456; 708-298-1612.

Timelines for Accreditation

Many programs seeking accreditation seem to follow a school calendar, beginning the self-study in September and seeking a validation visit in April or May. As a result, the spring is a very busy time for arranging visits. In your planning, remember these important scheduling points:

The Academy requires 30 working days (6 weeks) to set-up a visit. If you do not want your visit the last week of school, do not wait until the last minute to send in your Program Description.

Be very attentive when you identify available dates for the visit. Once the visit is arranged, if the director changes the date, it is difficult to reschedule. A processing fee of $50 will be charged for visits that have to be rescheduled at the program's request.

Commissions meet every 8 weeks throughout the year, with meetings scheduled in May and June to accommodate the busy season. Following Commission meetings, Academy staff must review decisions and prepare reports. If you want to receive your decision before the school year ends, you should send in your Program Description no later than early March. Programs are notified of the Commission decision in writing following the meeting. Directors should *not* call the Academy to learn the decision.

To avoid the spring rush, directors may want to schedule the validation visit during the fall or winter.

New Extension Policy Is Established

A number of programs in the country have achieved accreditation twice and have requested special consideration and/or an extension of their accreditation. The NAEYC Governing Board agreed that the Academy staff should have the option of granting a fourth-year extension to these programs if they meet the following requirements:

1. The same director is present.
2. Staff turnover is low.
3. Compliance with Criteria is high.
4. No complaints were verified.
5. Accreditation has never been deferred.

If your program is eligible for a fourth-year extension and meets the above requirements, submit a written request documenting that the above requirements have been met.

Validator Trainings Are Scheduled

We greatly appreciate the contribution of all those who serve as validators. Individuals who attend validator training agree to conduct a minimum of three (1- or 2-day) visits per year. Please be aware of this time commitment before attending, and confirm with your employer that you may take leave to conduct validation visits. Many employers consider validation visits a professional development experience.

The following trainings are planned for individuals who are interested in serving as validators and for individuals who have been previously trained but need a refresher on procedures.

November 9, 1993—Anaheim, CA, NAEYC Annual Conference

February 4, 1993—Chicago, IL, Chicago AEYC Conference

March 11 or 12, 1994—Santa Clara, CA, CA-AEYC Conference

March 16, 1994—Milwaukee, WI, WECA Conference

April 20, 1994—Peoria, IL, Midwest AEYC Conference

Other trainings will be planned in response to a need for validators in various areas. If you would like to participate in any of these trainings or would like to apply to become a validator, please request an application from the Academy. Validators need to have at least a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education and experience administering a program for young children. Directors of accredited programs are encouraged to become validators. Directors whose programs are seeking accreditation should not apply to become validators until accreditation is obtained; validator training is not to assist programs to achieve accreditation.

Responding to Director Evaluations

When validation visits are arranged, the Academy provides an evaluation form for directors to give us feedback on their experience with the accreditation process. Director evaluations are an important tool to help us maintain the reliability and quality of the system. If directors have a negative experience during the validation visit, they should provide us with written comment. We cannot correct errors or improve our service if we are unaware of problems.

Some concerns of directors are difficult to correct, however. For example, a number of directors report in validator evaluations that they would like to receive more feedback from validators during the validation visit. The Academy understands that directors would like to have a sense of completion following the validation visit; however, validators are instructed not to offer advice or recommendations to centers in an effort to maintain objectivity. The purpose of the validation visit is to verify the accuracy of the results of the self-study. The Commission does provide recommendations and suggested improvements when the program receives its accreditation decision.

Directors also comment that it would be helpful if validators could come to the center before the visit to familiarize themselves with the program. Although the Academy realizes that a 1-day validation visit might seem brief after such an in-depth self-study process, directors should understand that validators give their time voluntarily, and therefore the length of the visit is limited.

Directors and validators need to understand that the entire accreditation process is based on sampling. A sample of all applicable documentation is taken, samples of questionnaires are reviewed, and at least one classroom from each age group in a program is observed. Typically, validators do not see all the classrooms in a given program; however, at least 50% must be observed.

Another issue that is frequently mentioned on validator evaluations is teacher interviews. Directors often comment that all teachers should be interviewed during the validation visit. Teachers are only interviewed when it is necessary to obtain information that could not be observed.

A frequent question we hear is who should participate in the exit interview on the day of the validation visit. Some validators have questioned the presence of consultants or administrators who are not directly responsible for the daily operation of the program. The Academy Advisory Panel discussed this question and concluded that the purpose of the validation visit and exit interview is to gather data from those who are directly providing service to the children and are most knowledgeable about the program. Therefore, more than one person can be present in the interview, but those present should be regularly present in the program and must appear on the staff qualifications report.

New NAEYC Resources Just for Directors

NAEYC's new fall catalog contains some important new resources for directors of early childhood programs.

New books!

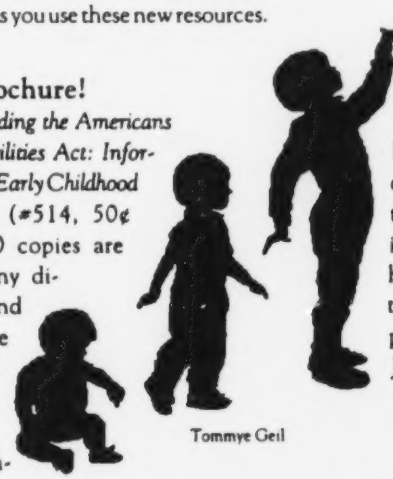
The What, Why, and How of High-Quality Early Childhood Education: A Guide for On-Site Supervision by Derry G. Koralek, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge (#336, $7) provides practical help for one of the most important but challenging aspects of administration—daily supervision of staff.

Preparing for Illness: A Joint Responsibility of Parents and Caregivers, #706, $2. This booklet, prepared by the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, provides detailed information on the signs, symptoms, and causes of specific illnesses including guidance for when to seek medical advice and when to exclude children from a child care setting.

Model Health Policies. With this valuable new resource prepared by the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Early Childhood Education Linkage System, directors have the tools they need to ensure accurate, current health policies without re-inventing the wheel. Written specifically for child care facilities, the print version of *Model Health Policies* includes text and model forms that can be easily duplicated ($716, $5). The computer disk versions of *Model Health Policies* can be easily customized with site-specific information. Disks are available for IBM-compatible systems—5¼" (#717, $5) and 3½" (#718, $5) and for Apple Macintosh System 6.X or greater (#719, $5). Note: If you order *Model Health Policies* on disk you should also order the text because it contains material not included on the disk. *Model Health Policies* is the first opportunity to obtain NAEYC resources on a computer disk. Please give us your feedback as you use these new resources.

New brochure!

Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act: Information for Early Childhood Programs (#514, 50¢ each; 100 copies are $10). Many directors and teachers are unsure of their responsibilities under the ADA. This new brochure, jointly developed by NAEYC and The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, provides introductory information plus a list of resources.



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New insurance policy!

NAEYC is pleased to announce that we can now provide nonprofit directors and officers liability insurance for programs. This coverage is available through our administrator, Forrest T. Jones & Company.

This policy will cover "wrongful acts" which are briefly defined as "Any misstatement, act or omission or breach of duty by the school, directors, trustees or officers in the discharge of their duties solely in their capacity as such." If you have any questions or would like to receive a quotation or sample policy, please contact Forrest T. Jones & Company at 800-821-7303 ext. 537.

The ACADEMY *Update*
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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 8 Number 2 Winter 1994

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers a professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *The Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *The Academy Update* (volume, number, and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

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Chicago AEYC Receives $2.1 Million Accreditation Grant

THE McCORMICK TRIBUNE FOUNDATION announces the award of a $2,188,000 grant to the Chicago Metropolitan Association for the Education of Young Children, an NAEYC Affiliate Group, to conduct a project to accredit early childhood education programs in the Chicago Metropolitan area. During the next 5 years, 60 programs will participate in the project. These programs represent a mix of populations, program types such as Head Start or child care, and severity of problems within the programs. Grant funds pay accreditation fees as well as quality improvement grants to programs averaging $20,000. Chicago AEYC will offer monthly round tables for directors and other technical support.

In addition to an increase in the number of accredited programs in the Chicago area, the goals of this 5-year initiative are (1) to educate directors, teachers, parents, and policy makers about accreditation; (2) to develop a model for implementation of a campaign that other cities can replicate; and (3) to establish this project as a long-term program of Chicago Metro AEYC.

A two-pronged evaluation of the project is planned annually. The first aspect is a process evaluation assessing whether the sites receive the technical assistance they need and whether the project is well-managed and planned. The second element is an outcome evaluation to answer questions such as

- What specific ways did the accreditation process improve the quality of selected programs?
- Are parents in Chicago becoming more aware of accreditation?
- Are directors becoming more committed to accreditation?

An advisory committee comprised of early childhood experts, directors of accredited programs, a project evaluator, a public relations expert, business community representatives, and others will help Chicago Metro AEYC develop a plan to make this a long-term project. Another projected outcome is a set of policy questions Chicago AEYC will seek to answer based on interviews with state and national policy makers.

For further information, contact Bee Jay Ciszek, Executive Director, Chicago Metro AEYC, 410 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 525, Chicago, IL 60605; 312-427-5399.

New Tax Credits Mean Lower Taxes or Bigger Refunds

"Raising a child takes love, understanding, patience, and money."

That's the theme of the Child Care Tax Credits Outreach Campaign, sponsored by the National Women's Law Center with the help of NAEYC and other groups. The Campaign is designed to spread the word about tax assistance available to low- and moderate-income families with children and encourage child care providers and other volunteers to help families—including those of many child care providers—claim the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child and Dependent Care Credit.

Families are eligible for an EIC of up to $2,364 if they earn up to $23,050 per year and have one or more qualifying children. They are also eligible for a Child and Dependent Care Credit of up to $1,440 if they have child care expenses for one or more children under age 13 and pay for child care in order to work.

President Clinton's budget, passed by Congress last summer, makes significant changes to the EIC; these changes, however, will not take effect until the 1994 tax year. For families with two or more children, the maximum basic credit will rise 69% to $3,370. To obtain the credit, these families may have annual incomes of up to $27,000. The maximum credit for families with one child will increase by 11% to $2,040. These families may have incomes of up to $23,760 to be eligible for EIC. The EIC will be simplified so that the current extra credits for supplemental young child and health care costs will be eliminated. For the first time, the EIC will be available to certain individuals and couples who have no children, are between the ages of 25 and 64, and who earn up to $9,000. The maximum credit of $306 will be available. These changes will benefit approximately 11 million low-income families; an additional 5 million individuals will benefit from the inclusion of persons with no children.

The goal of the Child Care Tax Credits Outreach Campaign is to see that every working family receives every dollar to which it is entitled. A flier based on the "Raising a child . . ." theme is available for distribution through more than a dozen major child care organizations, including NAEYC. To obtain a flier, call NAEYC's Public Affairs Department at 202-232-8777, or write to NAEYC Public Affairs, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426.

The flier will make parents aware of the two tax credits and urge them to get more information by calling the IRS toll-free number, 800-TAX-1040, or by contacting a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) center, which provides free tax help, in their community.

Interpreting Revised Criterion J-2

The revised accreditation Criteria include the following new **J-2**: "The annual program evaluation examines the adequacy of staff compensation and benefits, and rates of staff turnover, and a plan is developed to increase salaries and benefits to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff and continuity of relationships." Because this criterion is new, directors may need help complying with this standard and validators may be unsure of what evidence to examine in validating it.

Of course, programs can use a variety of strategies to address this criterion. Salary studies may have been conducted in their area or state that can be used for comparison data. One director of a hospital-affiliated child care center developed job descriptions and responsibilities for staff and conducted a study of comparable positions and salaries in the hospital. This study was used successfully with hospital administrators to obtain salary increases for child care teachers. A very useful tool for evaluating a program's compliance with **J-2** is available from NAEYC: *Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs*, Barbara Willer, Editor, NAEYC #137, $6. Completed worksheets from this publication could be presented as evidence for compliance with **J-2**.

1994 Minnesota Round Table

For Kids' Sake—Prevent Violence

May 20–21, 1994

Brooklyn Park, MN

For registration information, contact CEED, University of Minnesota, 51 E. River Road, Rm. 174, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

NAEYC Revokes Accreditation

In the last few months, NAEYC revoked the accreditation of two different programs. These actions are in accordance with accreditation procedures described on page 10 of *Accreditation Criteria & Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*: "If accreditation is granted, it may be revoked upon determination that the program is no longer in compliance with the Criteria or if the program has failed to comply with Academy procedures." In each case, revocation of accreditation followed a revisit that was initiated in response to a complaint. Complaints reported lack of compliance with specific criteria that would affect the accreditation status of the program and were submitted by individuals who had direct knowledge of the programs. The constituents of accreditation—parents, teachers, directors, owners, validators, mentors, commissioners, funders, and others concerned about the quality and integrity of the accreditation system—need to be aware that procedures exist and are exercised to revoke accreditation, if necessary.

Unfortunately, as the incentives to achieve accreditation are raised, we find that a few programs either misrepresent the true situation for the validation visit or changes occur following accreditation. In a few cases, the Academy has heard reports that children are removed or additional staff are present on the day of the visit. Validators are reminded to carefully verify the accuracy of the staffing pattern and to record in the Program Description the number of children and staff observed if those numbers deviate in any way from the reported numbers. This procedure is especially important if the observed ratios and group sizes are different from those reported because the interpretation of the ratings reported from classroom observations could be affected. Reminder: at least two-thirds of the enrolled children must be present for a validation visit to be conducted.

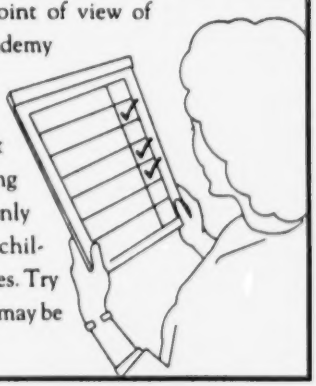
The Academy procedures also state, "If accreditation is granted, it is null and void if false information is knowingly submitted to the Academy at any time." Directors are reminded that in submitting a Program Description, they are required to sign a form indicating their knowledge of this and other procedures. Of course, any deliberate changes to the staffing pattern for the validation visit constitute submission of false information. The Academy relies on the integrity of all those engaged in the process. If misrepresentation occurs, anyone who is aware of the situation has an ethical responsibility to report it, in writing, to the Academy. Complainants are kept confidential, if requested.

Observing From a Child's-Eye View

Perhaps the most important aspect of the accreditation process is the information obtained from direct observation of children's experiences in classrooms. This information is critical to the teachers and directors as they conduct a self-study and identify areas in need of improvement. Then the validators' ratings of observed quality weigh heavily in the accreditation decision. The reliability and validity of these ratings depends to a large extent on the degree to which observers base their ratings on the quality of children's experience, as instructed on the observation form and in the *Guide to Accreditation*. Furthermore, the instructions emphasize that observers should follow children so that they really see the program from the child's point of view.

This type of observation is challenging but is key to an accurate assessment. For example, if an observer looks only at what teachers are doing, the observer may see that the teacher is available and responsive to children practically all the time and rate criterion **A-2,** fully met. However, if the observation is from the point of view of the children, a different picture may emerge. A responsive teacher who is working with an excessively large group may not be responding to all children. Some children may rarely or even never get the teacher's attention. Focusing only on the adult would not necessarily reveal this information.

As the accreditation system grows and many more people use the observation tool, we find that observing from the point of view of children is sometimes overlooked. Recently, Academy staff and commissioners identified some validation reports in which classroom ratings were all 3s but ratios and group sizes were significantly out of compliance with Academy Criteria. Assuming that validators and directors are honest, our only conclusion is that the observers did not follow children or base their ratings on children's experiences. Try observing "from the floor," so to speak. The view may be enlightening.



Becoming Accredited Crowns Long Career

Following is excerpted from the *News and Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina in July 1993:

After 23 years, Dorothy Wilson ended a very successful career as director of Method Day Care Center in Raleigh, North Carolina. Wilson, who is 63, guided Method from humble beginnings to its status as one of the city's most respected centers. Teachers and parents of both current and former students say although Wilson is retiring she will not be forgotten.

The unusual center's success is a tribute to Wilson's efforts. Started in 1969, its earliest charges were children from the area's low-income working families. Children from middle- and upper-income families were admitted after the center moved in 1974.

"The mix reflects the real world, and it's valuable for the community. Dorothy Wilson took the mission seriously and held her ground for ensuring it wasn't an all middle-class center," said a parent.

Method Day Care Center also stood out in the early days because Wilson mandated that an educational curriculum be offered years before required by the state.

This past spring Wilson achieved a long-term goal when Method received accreditation by NAEYC. Once the center received accreditation, Wilson decided the time had come to concentrate on other interests. "Accreditation was my ultimate goal," said Wilson. "I'd carried Method as far as I could take it. Now, we need new goals and new people. I want to walk out of here on a high note."

Accreditation Benefits Growing

Dear Academy Staff:

When we received notice of our accreditation last year, we were thrilled by your recognition and proud of our accomplishments. Much to our surprise, we also felt a kind of 'void' and lack of direction. I would like to share with you some news of our first year as an accredited center.

First, we see our recognition changing in the community. Parents feel reassured that their instincts are correct, that large teacher-directed groups of children studying academics and doing cut and paste activities is not appropriate to early learning.

Second, we have assumed a new leadership role for early childhood professional development. I have provided workshops for centers, presented at statewide conferences, and spoken to college classes about the accreditation process and the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices.

The state of New Hampshire has a unique program that recognizes accredited centers with an annual stipend of $1500. In return, the accredited center agrees to be a Mentor Center to other area early childhood programs that are interested in accreditation. We are appreciative of New Hampshire's awareness of the effort and the money it takes to provide a quality program for young children.

We continue to strive for ways to be more responsive to the needs of families and staff and to provide the most appropriate education for young children. We also see our role growing into one of providing support to other programs involved in accreditation. Additionally, we find the benefits of accreditation to be many and are thankful for our participation in the Academy's program.

—Susan Cooney Hagner
Program Director
Emerson School for Preschoolers
Concord, New Hampshire

Using Technology To Enhance Learning

In an earlier issue of *The Academy Update*, we asked for information regarding programs' use of technology. Here is one response to our request:

Our accredited part-day program uses both computers and videotapes. We have used computers in our program for a year, having obtained both of them from donations. The computers move to each class, rotating with the water table, media table, and woodworking table. The most positive result that our staff has observed is the socialization that is fostered at the computer. There is much discussion about which button to push, whose turn it is, and which game to play. One child who was very quiet and often played alone became the computer expert in the class and showed other children how to play the games. At our school the computer has become more a vehicle for socialization than a tool for cognitive learning.

We have used videotapes often for staff training, but this year we have begun to use them with children as they fit into a particular unit. While we are still in the experimental stage, generally our guidelines for using videotape have been: (1) Review to see if it fits with the unit or group. (2) The video should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. (3) Use as a special event, not a daily activity. (4) Have some type of follow up.

At our school we have found that

continued on page 5

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New National Health Resource Available

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announces the establishment of the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at the National Center for Education in Maternal Health, Georgetown University. The Bureau saw the need to establish a national resource center due to the dramatic increase in the number of women who work outside the home and the great need for affordable and safe child care arrangements. The mission of the Center is to support state health and licensing agencies, child care providers, child care health professionals, parents, and child advocates in their efforts to promote health and safety in child care settings.

The Center's activities include: providing training and technical assistance in upgrading existing child care health and safety standards; maintaining data bases to track information on state health and safety standards, innovative program initiatives, descriptions of training programs and curricula, and a registry of child care health consultants and resource organizations; identifying and disseminating research on health and safety in child care; developing resource materials and increasing public awareness of health and safety issues in child care; and providing a forum for sharing knowledge.

For further information, contact Carole Kuhns, R.N., M.S., Project Director, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, 703-524-7802.

Preventing HIV/AIDS Transmittal

The *Washington Post* and *USA Today* reported in December about two cases in which the AIDS virus was transmitted between children, raising fears about transmission in child care settings. The two cases do not reveal a new way to become infected with HIV. Instead, the situations appear to be the tragic result of disregarding long-established safety guidelines, underscoring the extreme importance of following universal precautions established by the Centers for Disease Control for both center and home settings. One situation involved possible transmission of the virus when an infected child with bleeding gums shared a toothbrush with another child. The other case involved two brothers with hemophilia who shared a bloodied razor.

The media coverage raised questions about safety precautions in early childhood programs. Although these episodes do not reveal new information about the transmittal of HIV, they do suggest the need for continued instruction and reminders for staff about these precautions.

Acknowledging parents' fears is important while also reassuring them. The risk of HIV transmission by blood to skin opening or mucous membrane has long been known, and is the reason why blood from any source must be treated as possibly infected. Equally important to emphasize is that the universal precautions established to reduce the risk of HIV transmission are effective.

The guidelines can be obtained in full from the state chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics or your local public health agency. The basic guidelines are as follows: staff and children should wash their hands thoroughly before eating, before and after using the toilet or changing a diaper, and before and after treating a cut or wound. Gloves should be worn if there is contact with blood or blood-containing body fluids or tissue discharge. Listed below are some resources outlining these procedures:

Caring for Children with HIV or AIDS in Child Care, $10 + $3 shipping, available from Child Care Law Center, 22 Second Street, 5th Fl., San Francisco, CA 94105.

HIV/AIDS: A Challenge to Us All: A Parent Education Program (also in Spanish), available from the Pediatrics AIDS Foundation, 1311 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404, 310-395-9051.

TECHNOLOGY *continued from page 4*

videotapes are most beneficial if the video is used to reinforce a story after it is read to the children. One of our teachers reads a story to the children; later in the week she plays the videotape of the story, stopping it before it gets to the end. Discussion follows about how the children remember the ending. The teacher then plays the ending to confirm (or not) the memories.

A video camera is one of the things we keep on our wish list. A camera would be helpful to parents, staff, and children to videotape daily events to share activities, focus on a problem behavior, relive a favorite field trip—the possibilities are endless.

Any tool that is used for education can be abused. Books in the classroom are good; inappropriate books are not. If computers and videotapes are used to enhance children's learning, they can be valuable tools for education.

—Joyce Daniels, Director

Cautions on Supervision

Following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the Academy by a director of an accredited program.

We pride ourselves on our learning centers, the whole language approach, and our beautiful classrooms. Most of my staff are college graduates, many with early childhood degrees. I have been a director of early childhood programs for over 10 years. I currently serve as a professor at the local community college, as well as serving as a board member of our state AEYC. Recently I was trained as a validator by the Academy.

> "Supervision by sight and sound must take precedence over setting up learning centers or putting out paints . . ."

In all of my training and experience, I have known about the importance of supervising children. I have read and discussed with the staff the phrase, "by sight and by sound." But until this year, I never fully understood the importance of this statement.

It was a superb day in the program. We had celebrated the holidays by inviting in grandparents for a breakfast along with singing and dancing with their grandchildren. Following lunch the 4- and 5-year-old group went out to the playground. One of the children came to get his teacher, telling her to come and see what the other children were doing. The teacher followed, and found four children hitting another child who was lying on the ground. The teacher quickly picked up the child, assembled the children, and returned with them to the classroom.

She began story time with a book about sharing and caring for our friends. They discussed how wrong it is to hit anyone and that it is important to talk about feelings when we are angry. I spoke to each parent whose child was involved, telling them what had happened on the playground and how their child had been included in these events. I spent hours talking to parents.

We have survived this incident. The children are all okay. We have asked that each family meet with a psychologist we provided. A special teaching program dealing with abuse and bullying issues has been instituted in our program.

I do not think any of my staff has fully recovered from this incident. With only a second of neglect, while the teachers chatted about the wonderful grandparents' breakfast and failed to keep both ears and eyes on the children, a terrible thing happened to one of our children. We are still feeling the strain of this momentary lapse in supervision and trying to deal with readjusting to working with children without feeling fearful and stressed.

Having gone through this traumatic incident, I feel it is crucial that we define more specifically what is meant by supervision by sight and by sound. I am now more aware of the endless possibilities of things that can go wrong if we are not vigilant in our supervision of children.

Supervision by sight and sound must take precedence over setting up learning centers or putting out paints, clay, or water tables. In all we have learned about developmentally appropriate curriculum and providing the best environments, we cannot forget that safety must always come first.

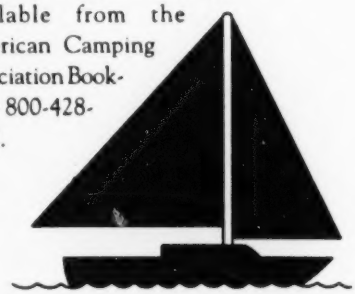
Novel Approach To Learning About Risk Management

Organizations that provide education and recreation for children are held to high standards of trust and responsibility. They exist to serve children well and to serve them safely. What if some unforeseen incident happened? What if the event ended up in the courts? What would be your organization's defense?

In an effort to address these questions the American Camping Association and Markel Rhulen Underwriters and Brokers co-sponsored a Risk Management Forum last November in Richmond, Virginia. The featured session at the forum was a mock trial focused on identifying risk areas and developing procedures to improve an organization's operations in this area. The trial simulated a camp case argued by experienced attorneys before a judge. Forum participants served as jurors.

This unique educational event demonstrated the importance of risk management planning for camps and other operations that provide outdoor services. Participants came away from the trial with a deeper understanding of the importance of staff training, emergency procedures, and proper documentation.

In April the American Camping Association will release a 1-hour-and-15-minute videotape containing the testimony of five of the witnesses from the mock trial. Accompanying the videotape is an Instructor Workbook. The cost for both items is $99, available from the American Camping Association Bookstore 800-428-2267.



Validation Procedures and Ethics

Recently a validator wrote to the Academy expressing her concern about a situation in her area. An early childhood program upon completion of its final documentation, asked a validator to walk through the program prior to the validation visit to tell the director everything that was wrong with the program. This person was not the validator who conducted the actual visit, but was one in the area who was not associated with the program.

The individual who reported this situation stated that "it smacks of dishonesty and cheapens the entire process." She went on to say,

> "The accreditation process is very straightforward. Programs know exactly what is expected of them. The self-study is meant to indicate both areas of strength and those needing improvement within a program . . . Undoubtedly, programs work toward improvements prior to the validation visit. In verifying the center's information the validator and later the commissioners trust the center has presented itself in an honest manner.
>
> During validator training we were told that we are not to be consultants to programs (during visits). From this point on, as I am involved in future visits, I will always wonder whether a validator spent time in the program pointing out things to remove, add, change, etc. to help create a show on the day of the validation visit.
>
> To return to my original concern, it is now known in the area that a validator walked through the program prior to the visit. I have already been approached by directors to review their programs prior to their validation visits. I have refused. I applaud the efforts of those programs that continue to follow procedures in an ethical manner and ultimately may be deferred. In my opinion, these programs deserve more credit than the programs that attempt to undermine the accreditation system."

The Academy staff share this validator's concern. Although validators are free to serve as consultants for programs, we strongly recommend that they separate the functions of validator and consultant clearly and that they are careful not to promise a successful accreditation experience. We also emphasize that such preparation as described above is not necessary and may create additional problems. Directors should be aware that if they have a question about interpreting the Criteria or procedures, only the Academy staff is authorized to officially represent NAEYC in interpreting the accreditation procedures and Criteria (see page 12 of *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures*).

At their May 1994 meeting, the Academy Advisory Panel will consider the issue of a code of ethics for validators and commissioners. Information for their consideration should be sent to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters no later than April 15.

BARRY HYLAND of Colorado, who died February 3, 1993, was a longtime validator and commissioner and was always willing to go out of his way to support the accreditation system. In a final gesture of his tremendous dedication to our efforts, Mr. Hyland included a provision in his will to support NAEYC accreditation. We are sincerely grateful for this expression of commitment to the work that we do on behalf of children.

Validator Trainings Planned

We greatly appreciate the contribution of all those who serve as validators. Individuals who attend validator training must agree to conduct a minimum of three (1- or 2-day) visits per year. Please be aware of this time commitment before attending training, and confirm with your employer that you may take leave to conduct validation visits. Many employers consider validation visits a professional development experience.

The following trainings are planned for individuals who are interested in serving as validators and for individuals who have been previously trained but need a refresher on procedures.

April 15, 1994—Denver, CO

April 20, 1994—Peoria, IL

April 28, 1994—Syracuse, NY

May 12, 1994—Sugarloaf, ME

November 29, 1994—Atlanta, NAEYC Annual Conference

Other trainings will be planned in response to a need for validators. If you would like to participate in a training or would like to apply to become validator, request an application from the Academy. Validators need to have at least a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education and experience administering a program. Directors of accredited programs are encouraged to become validators. Directors whose programs are seeking accreditation should not apply to become validators until accreditation is obtained; validator training is not to assist programs to achieve accreditation.

Zero to Three Is Valuable Resource for Infant/Toddler Programs

Zero to Three is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the healthy physical, cognitive, and social development of infants, toddlers, and their families. Established in 1977, **Zero to Three** is committed to leadership in developing a national vision addressing the importance of the first 3 years of life and the need for early intervention to promote healthy growth and development; focusing attention on the quality of infants' and toddlers' relationships and on children's day-to-day experiences within these relationships; developing a broader understanding of how services for infants, toddlers, and their families are best provided; and promoting training in keeping with that understanding.

Zero to Three sponsors multidisciplinary conferences and other training activities; provides technical assistance; publishes several newsletters and other publications; and serves as a resource center on a wide variety of topics concerned with infants, toddlers, and their families. For information contact Abbey Griffin, Zero to Three, 2000 14th Street North, Suite 380, Arlington, VA 22201, 703-528-4300, FAX 703-528-6848, TDD 703-528-0419.

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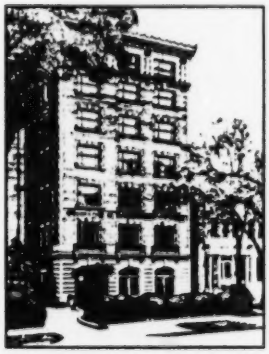

Check your records!

NAEYC moved to its present location in January 1993. Please make certain that you have the correct address. NAEYC's telephone numbers have not changed.

NAEYC
1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-232-8777 800-424-2460 FAX 202-328-1846

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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 9 Number 1 Fall 1994

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers a professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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naeyc

Companies Discover Quality Child Care Is Good Business

AMONG THE MORE PRESTIGIOUS, and coveted, recognitions in the business community today is *Working Mother*'s annual list of the 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers. This year's winners were announced in the October 1994 issue of the magazine. Many of these companies demonstrate their support of families by promoting high-quality child care through NAEYC accreditation. Work/Family Directions in Boston, making the list for the third time, is not only supportive of its own employees' family needs, but also administers the American Business Collaboration and other initiatives that provide support for NAEYC accreditation throughout the country. Also making the list, for the fourth time, is Bright Horizons Children's Centers, Inc., which runs 72 corporate child care centers, many of which are NAEYC accredited. As *Working Mother* points out, "Child care centers have never been known as good workplaces, but co-founders Linda Mason and Roger Brown have tried hard to change that."

Heading the (alphabetical) list of 10 Best Companies is **AT&T.** A long-time supporter of accreditation, AT&T recently raised its total commitment to accreditation to $300,000. This scholarship fund pays NAEYC accreditation fees to any child care program that serves the family of at least one AT&T employee. Support is available to a center for initial accreditation and reaccreditation (no fees for six years). Programs are eligible to apply for funds for reaccreditation even if initial accreditation was not paid by AT&T. This opportunity is available through the AT&T parents who should contact their work/family representative for information.

One of the first companies in the country to recognize the value of accreditation and provide funds for scholarships and grants to centers that serve its employees, **IBM** makes the top 10 list for the seventh time. **Johnson & Johnson,** also on the top 10 list, supported accreditation initiatives in selected communities, and also provides an NAEYC-accredited on-site child care center for its employees at its corporate headquarters. **Dupont,** in its seventh year on the list of 100 best companies, supports accreditation through its Flying Colors project.

The press conference announcing the list was a special event attended by CEOs of the best companies and featuring Secretary of Labor Robert Reich and *Working Mother*'s 1994 Family Champion, George Lucas, the legendary filmmaker. Accolades to *Working Mother* magazine for making companies want to compete to provide more family-friendly employment and support for high-quality child care.

New Policies To Improve Validation Process

Validators are early childhood professionals who volunteer their time to serve the accreditation system. In this role, validators serve two vitally important functions: they help improve the quality of care and education provided for our nation's children and they help ensure the integrity of the accreditation system by providing clear and accurate information about programs' compliance with the Criteria for accreditation decisions. The success of the accreditation system depends on the professional judgments of validators as well as their ethical and professional conduct. We very much appreciate the contributions of the hundreds of validators who do such an excellent job for NAEYC and the early childhood profession.

As the system has grown, we have encountered greater challenges in maintaining consistency and reliability among a large pool of validators. We realize that the performance of validators is key to the integrity of the system. To help maintain and improve the reliability of validators, the Academy Advisory Panel considered numerous suggestions and agreed on several new policies.

In the future, validators will be required to be retrained on a regular basis, preferably every three years. The Academy Training Coordinator, Stacey Stricklin, will begin retraining sessions this fall. Time will be required to implement this policy nationally, but it is our goal for the immediate future.

The success of the accreditation system depends on the professional judgments of validators as well as their ethical and professional conduct.

Beginning this fall, validators will be asked to complete evaluation forms on their fellow validators' performance on the day of the visit. Currently, directors are asked to complete a validator evaluation form voluntarily and staff evaluate the validators' completion of the paperwork. But sometimes, the only way we learn about unprofessional conduct is by report from the other validator. One validator for a program that was subsequently deferred was reported to have inappropriately promised accreditation with statements such as, "Relax, there's nothing to be worried about; the program is great." Other validators have expressed overt bias for types of programs, "I'm surprised to see this good quality in a for-profit chain." In rare instances, we find that validators have different interpretations of the Criteria or different standards for what constitutes a rating. For example, we hear reports that some validators are known to "be easy" while others have a reputation for "being sticklers."

We are grateful to the hundreds of validators who perform this challenging role competently and professionally. To protect their integrity, we will respond to complaints about validators' performance and we can only take action when we have specific information.

Important Reminders for Directors and Validators

Recently, some programs have had negative experiences with their validation visits due to lack of understanding of important procedures and policies. These procedures are in writing in the *Guide to Accreditation* (see pages 201 to 213):

Approximately two-thirds of the children **must** be present on the day of the visit for the visit to be conducted. We realize that directors cannot guarantee that children attend and we allow for a reasonable absentee rate. But if more than one third of the children are not present, the validators cannot observe a typical day.

Validators must observe at least 50% of the groups, attempting to observe different age groups.

The visit should occur on the day or days of the week when the largest number of children are enrolled.

Validators should record both their own comments and the director's comments for every nonvalidated criterion. Too many Program Descriptions are being returned with no comments on nonvalidated criteria or with no comments from the director. In these situations, appropriate procedures have not been followed. The validation process is a comparison of internal and external evaluations. The opportunity for both perspectives to be presented is essential to ensuring a fair and accurate decision.

Children or staff should **never** be moved to another group for the day of the validation visit and parents should never be asked to keep their children home that day (situations that have been reported to us). These actions constitute submission of false information, a condition that invalidates the data collected during the visit or if discovered afterward, constitutes grounds for revocation of accreditation.

Continuity of Relationships Among Adults and Children Is Essential for Quality

One of the most important tasks of early childhood is the ability to develop relationships with other people. In the November 1993 *Young Children*, Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the world famous early childhood programs in Reggio Emilia, Italy, describes "an education based on relationships," stressing that relationships are essential for all areas of children's learning and development, not just the social and emotional realms. In the city-run child care programs in Reggio Emilia, groups of children remain intact with the same team of two teachers for a period of three years (6 months to 3; and 3 through 5).

In NAEYC's accreditation system, the issue of continuity of relationships between adults and children is addressed in criterion **F-3** that states, "Each staff member has primary responsibility for and develops deeper attachment to an identified group of children. Every attempt is made to have continuity of adults who work with children, particularly infants and toddlers. Infants spend the majority of the time interacting with the same person each day." Although the criterion mentions "each day" with infants, the spirit of this criterion is to support continuity of relationships over time.

Recently, Academy staff reviewed the Staffing Pattern for a program that described four groups, each with different staff members: infants, junior toddlers, senior toddlers, and 2-year-olds. Each of these groups enrolled 8 children so the center was gaining no advantage in staff-child ratio by moving children from group to group so frequently. In this same Program Description, criterion **F-3** was validated as fully met. Apparently, both director and validators did not relate the group organization of the program to this criterion, perhaps because the criterion is not specific in defining *continuity*. However, there is growing recognition that children experience enough disruption from staff turnover and family transience without programs adding to this stress. The group organization itself should not be an additional source of chaos in the lives of young children, forcing them to adapt to new adults every six months or year.

The yearly group change is a vestige of the traditional elementary school graded structure, which has come under criticism as too rigid for older children and is being replaced in many places by multi-age grouping or teachers' staying with the same group for multiple years. Early childhood programs should not emulate a questionable elementary school practice, yearly promotion to the next age group, nor should they mislead parents into thinking that such movement represents "progress."

Whenever the topic of continuity is discussed, someone always asks, "But what if the child has a bad teacher? They'll be stuck with that person for two or three years!" This possibility always seems to generate more concern than the existence of the bad teacher in the first place. The first priority should be to evaluate teachers' performance on a regular basis and remove or reassign "bad teachers." In the rare instance where individual children and teachers clash in terms of personality, exceptions can be made and children moved to other groups. Policy, however, should not be based on the exception. Often when teachers work with children for more extended periods of time, they get to know the children and families better and the problem that raised concern is resolved. As programs engage in self-study for accreditation, we hope that they seriously evaluate the degree to which children experience continuity of relationships with adults and other children. Be sure to think about this criterion as with all the interactions criteria, from the child's point of view.

New NAEYC Video Available—*Men: Caring for Young Children*

Throughout history, fathers, grandfathers, brothers, and uncles have cared for generations of young children. With changing family patterns, men are needed as professional teachers and caregivers.

Men: Caring for Young Children is a new 30-minute videotape available from NAEYC (order #812, $20). The program celebrates men who have chosen careers working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and young school-age children in a variety of educational environments. Bonita Klemm, State University of New York, produced the video with a grant from the New York State Education Department.

"Validation Procedures and Ethics" Generates Diverse Views From Directors, Validators

An article entitled "Validation Procedures and Ethics" that appeared in The Academy Update, *Vol. 8, No. 2, Winter 1994, generated more letters than any ever published. The article was written by a validator who expressed concerns about other validators conducting "walk-throughs" of programs prior to visits. The author was concerned that the "walk-throughs" contributed to programs "putting on a show" or making cosmetic changes for the real visit. The issue was discussed at the Academy Advisory Panel meeting in May 1994. The Panel agreed that the issue is complex and deserves more study. The Panel agreed to encourage discussion of the role of consultation in the accreditation process. The letters that appear here on pages 4 to 6 capture all the critical issues. Although we do not believe that "walk-throughs" are necessary, the issue of consultation is one situation where several different perspectives are legitimate and valid.*

Dear Academy Update,

Concerning the article "Validation Procedures and Ethics," the issues raised are important ones that I have been involved with myself. I have called your office to obtain your guidance to not become enmeshed in a moral dilemma.

As a consultant, a validator, someone whose program has been accredited, and a trainer, I am occasionally asked to consult with programs about accreditation. Yesterday, I observed a center's staff using the "Classroom Observation" as a tool to define quality child care. I hope this will be the beginning of their applying for accreditation, and appreciate the tool for its criteria and definitions. It is a fine piece of work.

I have conducted visits to programs in the process of becoming accredited, to help them define areas of concern, and to brainstorm ways of meeting the accreditation standards. The article alludes to consulting in this manner as "smacking of dishonesty and cheapening the entire process." I disagree, though I think some conflicts do exist, and need to reflect on this new ethical quagmire.

Perhaps the timing of the consultation is critical, but are not programs continually upgrading their quality? Is there harm to a continuing process of defining what quality child care looks like? Are a validator's eyes not a tool for reflection for a program trying to achieve quality? When should programs stop seeking advice from others—when their paperwork goes in? These are not the questions that produce my ethical dilemma. I can only applaud programs for doing all they can to meet quality child care criteria. Rather, my ethical questions follow—

Those programs that can afford to hire a consultant have an unfair advantage over other programs in all areas, not just accreditation issues. This is a moral dilemma we all need to ponder and the original reason I called you when I was asked to consult about accreditation.

The validation visit is the weakest link in the whole accreditation process. The snapshot I see as a validator is nothing compared to the *process* that a program goes through to achieve accreditation. Having gone through accreditation myself, the self-study was the best thing that ever happened to our program. It is a moral dilemma for me as a validator to have so much importance placed upon the validation visit. I give just as little weight to a pre-validation consultation. Anything hurriedly faked during the validator's visit should show up if the visit is thorough. A pre-validation visit should only help bring reality to the director and staff of the intent and process of validation and dispel some of their fear. None of the programs I have yet validated has completely understood the role of the validator. One program CEO was on hand to greet me upon my arrival, unable to hide his irritation and disappointment that I had only traveled from two counties away and not from Washington, D.C.!

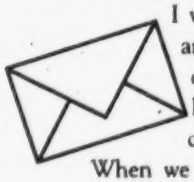
It is absolutely a conflict of interest for a consultant to a program to become a validator for its accreditation (as is specified in the Academy's Guidelines for Conflict of Interest). This conflict would be "dishonest and cheapen the process."

Last, I see accreditation becoming a trophy at the end of a competition. It saddens me to think that a measure of quality child care can become something elite and held as a winner among losers who do not have the trophy. If we are not all in this together, as an early childhood community, we serve ourselves instead of children and families. When I am asked, it would be an ethical dilemma for me not to help others who are studying themselves in the context of quality child care, accreditation or otherwise. Accreditation is only one tool (the best I know of, I admit) to achieving quality in child care. How can this be harmful, if quality is the result?

—Curry Ander
Early Childhood Consultant

More Thoughts on Validation Procedures and Ethics . . .

Dear Academy Update,



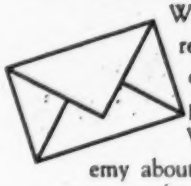
I was disturbed by the article entitled "Validation Procedures and Ethics." We are now doing our self-study. When we began to familiarize ourselves with the Criteria in the fall of 1992, my staff had many questions. At that time, my staff had been with our program an average of four years and had obtained at least 15 hours of training each year which included training in developmentally appropriate practice. Their questions dealt with issues concerning wording of the Criteria. The person who wrote the letter contained in the article stated that "The accreditation process is very straightforward. Programs know exactly what is expected of them." I disagree with that statement. The goals expressed in the Criteria rarely have measurable, objective criteria, and validators make subjective judgments when they observe. Many of the Criteria can be interpreted many ways and to differing degrees. This January, some of the directors in this area were discussing some of the ways Criteria were being interpreted. They felt that interpretations of the Criteria by validators were inconsistent and were keeping accredited programs from being renewed and new programs from accreditation. For example, I've heard a variety of interpretations of the word *available*. One center reported that they were told that music had to be playing in the classroom all day and that toy vacuums were not considered push toys!

We have worked hard over the last two years to comply with the Criteria. When we began the formal self-study, more questions arose, "What do they mean by . . . ?" To help us understand, I spoke to a validator in the area about doing an informal "walk-through" before submitting documentation to help us pinpoint areas that we did not interpret the same way a validator might and to give us a chance to make improvements before spending the money, time, and emotional energy required in setting up a validation visit. (It can be very demoralizing for a center to fail in its bid for accreditation because of the difference in interpretation of the Criteria.) It is clearly understood that the validator would not be checking every area and that implementation of her suggestions would not guarantee accreditation, but that the validator would be acting as an advisor and friend.

The author of the letter also implied that the purpose of a consulting visit before the validation visit is to "help create a show" and that "it smacks of dishonesty and cheapens the entire process" and is undermining the accreditation system. My understanding of the goal of accreditation is to improve the quality of child care. In my opinion, an informal consultation can serve the accreditation goal by helping programs to make changes that will improve the care they give children. Often the persons closest to a situation have the hardest time seeing something objectively and it helps to obtain an outside opinion. I believe that validators should consider offering themselves as consultants or mentors to programs to help them to understand the Criteria and to improve the quality of care in the center.

—Terri Sloan
Director

Dear Academy Update,



We were interested to read the article concerning validation procedures and ethics. We wrote to the Academy about this concern more than three years ago when we noticed potential problems in our community.

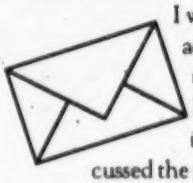
We are partners in a small child care consulting firm. We provide services to centers in many areas including facilitation of the accreditation process. We are also validators for the Academy.

Early on, we recognized the potential for a conflict of interest because of these closely associated roles. We felt it was important to make a contribution of our time to the field of early childhood education and as a result wished to continue volunteering as validators. Therefore, as a matter of corporate policy, we decided to accept validation assignments only for centers located in counties outside of our service area.

We notified the Academy of this decision and have been assigned centers in other counties. If a local center requests services from us, it is clearly a consulting job and there is no confusion about our roles as validators. The Academy may want to provide this type of guideline for validators. It removes local competition among centers and other organizations as an issue in validation and protects one from the perception of conflict of interest.

—Marge Marino and Linda Werner

Dear Academy Update,



I want to express my reaction to the article entitled, "Validation Procedures and Ethics." The article discussed the pros and cons of utilizing a co-professional to conduct a prevalidation visit at one's facility to prepare for the actual validation visit. The individual reporting such an incident stated that "it smacks of dishonesty and cheapens the entire process." While I agree with the Academy staff that that

continued on page 6

And More Thoughts on Validation Procedures and Ethics . . .

Editor's note: These letters continue a discussion from pages 4 and 5.

VALIDATION *continued from page 5*

practice must be handled with the utmost care and professionalism, I do not feel such a practice is inherently dishonest or that it necessarily cheapens the process.

The quote from the concerned individual conveys, to me, a fundamental philosophy that I have come across with a few other fellow validators which is that the validation process is some sort of test as opposed to a collaborative process with the goal of bringing programs up to quality standards. It is not dishonest to network with other professionals to bring one's program up to quality standards, in my opinion. I have run into this same attitude with co-validators who felt a program was dishonest in saying it was in compliance on certain items that it was not in compliance with during the self-study because the non-compliance issues were corrected by the time of the validation visit. To me, this means the program learned from the self-study, made corrections, and should be rated as in compliance if the items were in place by the time of the visit. The idea of the accreditation process, I believe, is to learn and change our programs to become quality programs per the guidelines. In all honesty, prior to the validation process, our programs may not have been totally in compliance with quality standards, however, the point is that we learn about that and take steps to improve. Validators need not behave as though it is our job to ferret out transgressions and act as child care police.

In California, we have a peer review process which is rampant with collaboration. I have no problem with contacting a fellow professional to help me bring my program up to our State Department of Education's Exemplary Program Standards. I do not view our process as passing a test. I view it as an effort to have the best program possible and I respect my fellow professionals as people who can help me meet that goal. We are not cheating or being dishonest, we are working together for the benefit of children. Again, I am in complete agreement that using a fellow validator to collaborate on pre-review walk-throughs needs to be handled professionally, but to view that activity as dishonest and cheap is missing the point of the review process.

I have been a validator since the inception of the validation process and do not want to see the process become a pass/fail situation that does not allow for helpful collaboration in the field. The attitude expressed in that article is of fundamental concern to me and shows a distrust of our fellow professionals which is regrettable.

—Dorothy Zitzmann
Validator

Dear Academy Update,

Any early childhood professional who is familiar with the NAEYC Criteria and procedures could reasonably evaluate a program and make her or his personal suggestions for improvement. The Criteria and the rating procedure are available to anyone who pays—and I would hope that many will continue to educate themselves about nationally recognized criteria for quality programs.

A quality program should submit to regular evaluations by an outsider/consultant. This evaluator should definitely be well versed in the NAEYC's Criteria! I admit, a program could "create a show" using physical materials—but regular handwashing, positive interactions, trained staff, and other important criteria cannot be successfully staged for one day. For example, I once observed a classroom where the caregiver was asking a number of excellent open-ended questions while most of the children ignored her attempts to converse with them. Finally, one of the children asked, "Why are you asking so many questions?" The caregiver turned about four shades of red and sat there speechless. These children were not accustomed to frequent interaction with this staff member.

Please do not punish those of us who are consultants as well as validators! I think we all have to remember—a validator cannot guarantee a successful accreditation visit—even when they are the assigned validator!

—Sherry L. Gray
Director and Validator

Plan to attend!

4th Annual Conference

NAEYC's National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

"The Professional Development Challenge"

June 21-24, 1995
San Francisco, CA

For more information contact
NAEYC's National Institute
for Early Childhood Professional
Development
1509 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

Resources To Serve Children with Special Needs

LEGAL MANDATES established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the increasing recognition of the benefits for all children when children with special needs are integrated in regular early childhood settings, have made inclusion ever more common in the 1990s. While the benefits are real, so too are the challenges of including children with special needs in regular early care and education settings. Thoughtful planning and follow-through is needed to make inclusion work. A new NAEYC publication, *A Place For Me: Including Children With Special Needs in Early Care and Education Settings* (NAEYC #237, $4.50), by Phyllis A. Chandler, is an encouraging and practical book that helps early childhood professionals realistically face the challenges of inclusion, understand its goals, and successfully integrate children with special needs in regular early childhood settings.

This inviting book is a great resource for early childhood teachers, family child care providers, and program administrators who are including one or more children with special needs in their program for the first time. Its reassuring approach puts individuals at ease with their feelings and concerns about the challenges of inclusion. *A Place For Me* addresses common misunderstandings, stating clearly that integration does *not* mean that children with special needs do not need or will not receive special services. Equally erroneous is the assumption that all children with special needs will require extensive additional resources from program staff. As Chandler says, "Although the program must be realistic about its resources, both actual and potential, a 'can-do' attitude is the most important asset to successful integration of children with special needs." Other topics include preparing yourself and the physical environment, understanding characteristics of children with special needs and those with typical needs, working with parents, and working with other agencies. Especially useful is the book's extensive listing of resources on meeting the needs of children with special needs.

A second new resource addressing inclusion is NAEYC's latest research monograph, *Including Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Programs* (#145, $8.00), written by an outstanding team of special educators. This research monograph, edited by Mark Wolery and Jan S. Wilbers, provides an informative synthesis of an extensive body of research on including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. Based on decades of research, the authors draw implications for practice, emphasizing that to develop inclusive services that benefit all children, including those with special needs, early childhood staff must collaborate with the families of the children served as well as members of related disciplines such as occupational therapy and special education. Topics addressed include designing the environment, assessing children with special needs, implementing intervention practices, and helping children with disabilities make the transition between programs.

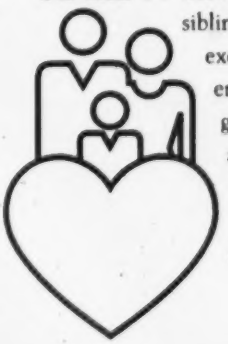
The Americans with Disabilities Act states that people with disabilities are entitled to equal rights (including access) to public accommodations such as preschools, child care centers, and family child care homes.

Dear Academy Update,

Last year you published our personal story about our son Chris, born with Down syndrome, who has been included in Kensington Forest Glen Child Center (formerly Kensington Day Care Center) in Silver Spring, Maryland, (Fall 1993, Volume 8, Number 1). We are writing again to announce two very exciting events that happened as a direct result of Christopher's successful experiences at this center.

Chris' teachers at KFGCC received, for the second year in a row, The Commitment to Education Award from The ARC of Montgomery County. Also, the United Way chose KFGCC as one of ten to be highlighted in its Nationwide United Way "Kick-off" Campaign airing on national television in September.

Our local TV network, Channel 20, taped Chris playing with his friends and siblings and interviewed my husband and me. It was tremendously exciting! After our interview the crew interviewed Chris' teachers and the director at the center. We hope that the center will gain national recognition for its all-inclusive, developmentally appropriate program. We have had such a positive experience with staff at this center and its very supportive leadership. We were honored that you printed our story and we wanted to share these recent accomplishments with you.



Sincerely,
Therese and Mark Divita

"Cautions on Supervision"—Misplaced Emphasis?

by Dale Borman Fink

The Academy Update (Winter 1994), printed a letter from a validator and director of an accredited program entitled "Cautions on Supervision." The commentary described a situation in which a lack of direct "sight and sound" supervision allowed the playground pummeling of one child by four of her or his peers—4- and 5-year-olds.

Let me hasten to agree with the anonymous writer that to send a group of preschoolers out to the playground before any of the staff are ready to join them is always a mistake. It is good to be reminded of how quickly lax supervision can turn a "superb day" into an unhappy occasion.

I found myself, troubled, however, that the letter narrowly emphasized the issue of supervision. To find four preschoolers hitting another whom they've knocked to the ground (assuming there was intent to do harm and this wasn't just dramatic play) is an unusual event. In one study of playground play (Pellegrini 1989), 11% of children's play behaviors were of the "rough-and-tumble" variety, but only 0.3% were aggressive. An event such as the one described signals us to wonder about prior unhealthy or injurious social interactions among some or all of these children. Would four children with no history of aggressive behaviors seize a brief window of opportunity and carry out a coordinated assault on a classmate?

In short, this incident should draw our attention to issues of social dynamics rather than to questions of supervision. Unhealthy social interactions may grow from many factors within children and within environments. It is neither accurate nor helpful to imply that an incident such as the one described can take place any time a teacher, anywhere, is momentarily rinsing out paintbrushes.

What also seems unhelpful is the level of emotional trauma expressed in the commentary. The writer does not think (weeks or months after the event, one gathers) "any of my staff has fully recovered from this incident." "With only a second of neglect . . . a terrible thing happened to one of our children." The director asked the family of each child involved to meet with a psychologist the center provided. (The letter does not indicate how families responded to the request.)

When we engage in our "sight and sound" supervision, here's one vote for hearing the voices of children actively engaged in conflict management and problem solving . . .

Where is the recognition that children (and adults too) learn and grow even in response to conflict and pain? With its emphasis on adult caregivers as eagle eyes whose first duty is to foresee and prevent the "endless possibilities of things that can go wrong," such a perspective is completely missing. Contrast this to the Japanese preschool profiled in the book *Preschool in Three Cultures* (Tobin, Wu, and Davidson 1989). Rather than trying to stop obnoxious and aggressive behaviors, the teacher and principal in that account viewed such behaviors as offering opportunities for classmates to problem-solve and to widen their own repertoire of social responses.

Also missing from the writer's narration are the voices and perspectives of the children. Were those involved in the incident—victim or victimizers—asked about their feelings and perceptions? "The teacher picked up the child, assembled the children, and returned with them to the classroom. She began storytime with a book about sharing and caring for our friends. They discussed how wrong it is to hit anyone." Suppose these children were playing cops-and-speeding motorists, and simply making an arrest the way they had seen it many times in the Rodney King videotape: Where was their chance to explain themselves? Admittedly, this is a far-fetched possibility, but shouldn't children always be encouraged to articulate their own perspectives (if they are able) before we come at them with our didactic picture books, our "special teaching program dealing with abuse and bullying issues," and our referrals to mental health professionals?

When we engage in our "sight and sound" supervision, here's one vote for hearing the voices of children actively engaged in conflict management and problem solving, and for seeing the beneficial consequences, and not just the painful ones, when things don't go the way we planned. Otherwise, we'll burn ourselves out worrying about all those "endless possibilities of things that can go wrong." Once that happens, a mental health posse on horseback won't be able to drag us back to our jobs.

Dale Borman Fink is a validator and a Ph.D. candidate in special education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

References

Pellegrini, A.D. 1989. Elementary school children's rough-and-tumble play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 4 (2): 245–260.

Tobin, J.J., Wu, D.Y.H., and Davidson, D.H. 1989. *Preschool in Three Cultures*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Reaccreditation:
A Tool for Continuous Quality Improvement

by Betty O'N. Garrett

Editor's note: One of the goals of accreditation is to engage early childhood programs in an ongoing, continuous process of quality improvement. Criteria **J-1, J-2, and D-4** *require annual evaluation and goal-setting. Following are excerpts from a report by a director of an accredited program that demonstrates one program's use of the accreditation process to achieve that goal. The author is director of Grace and Holy Trinity Child Care Center, Richmond, Virginia.*

Our program was originally accredited in October 1989 and reaccredited in 1992. The program has changed only in providing higher quality services for young children. I have remained the director of this program for 15 years, guiding the process of accreditation both times.

There are many ways to describe our maintenance of quality since 1992. We continue to provide a loving, nurturing environment. Our program is an open setting giving children many choices and providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Some highlights of our last two years are quite exciting to tell! The parent group and Board of Directors set about raising funds to renovate our playground to meet and exceed the Consumer Products Safety Commission guidelines for playground safety. The plan we chose is one that best meets our needs as a small backyard playground in an urban neighborhood. The equipment is by Kompan, the surface is sand, and there is a trike path of rubberized resilient material that nicely outlines play areas. The project cost $25,000. Parents, board members, and staff joined early one morning to install the equipment, shovel the 15 truck loads of sand, and share the accomplishment of cooperation. Our children have a wonderful adventure each day when they play on this playground. I observed an increase in cooperative play since the playground renovation, which was immediately visible. The arrangement of equipment and the number of different activities spawned some very exciting and imaginative play. There is also a raised bed garden where the children planted beans, corn, flowers, and tomatoes.

Another goal has been to be more aware and able to accept children with disabilities. The summer of 1993 presented us with a great opportunity to cooperate with a local group called the Virginia Foundation for the Exceptional Child and Adolescent. Through prior planning and coordination we were able to enroll two children with various disabilities. One child has autism; one is visually impaired and has ADHD with mild cerebral palsy and speech and language delays. We really put ourselves to the test that summer and discovered that inclusion is not that difficult! True there were days when we wondered why we'd ever agreed to do this, but in retrospect we learned a great deal about ourselves and grew tremendously from the experience.

A significant accomplishment is the organization of our curriculum materials and planning. Each teacher now has a specific period during the week for her or his planning time. The observed change from this one step is tremendous. As a director I see more creativity and sharing of ideas. There is even greater coordination between groups and communication among the teachers. Even though our curriculum has always been whole language, just this summer we formalized our approach and are using the term *whole language* to a much greater degree, thus educating parents. The parents are very interested and give input into this approach. The parents of this graduating class are asking kindergarten teachers and school administrators questions about their curriculum involvement with whole language.

Helpful in-service sessions the past year include "Gender Equity in the Classroom" and "Anti-Bias Curriculum." During both sessions, we updated our knowledge and set goals for the year(s) to come. We geared our thinking to a more positive, less tourist approach to strengthening our curriculum.

Even though we always incorporated movement into our daily plans, this year we have a teacher trained in dance and choreography on staff. There have been some visible changes in our children. By developing their large motor skills and becoming in tune with their bodies and abilities, their confidence increased and we observe risk taking with some of the more timid children in all areas. Parents participate with their child in their movement "class" which increases their understanding of expectations for preschoolers' physical strengths.

One of our weaknesses at our last validation was that I was the in-house substitute. My time was used quite often in the classroom focused on one or more groups rather than administering the whole program. This year our board approved funds to hire another full-time teacher to serve as a "floater" to alleviate the substitute crunch we had. Not only have we filled this position but we have increased our staff-child ratio. The teacher has a degree in early childhood

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Keys to Quality in the Ocean State

by Bill Strader, Mentor and Validator

Over the past few years Rhode Island AEYC has supported accreditation through workshops, presentations, and exhibits at the Annual Rhode Island Early Childhood Conference. With the advent of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the Rhode Island Child Care Training System, directed by Sue Connor, has taken an active role in promoting high quality through NAEYC accreditation. The Child Care Training System in collaboration with other professional organizations, including the RI Department of Education and RIAEYC, organized two statewide "Keys to Quality" conferences with another planned this fall. The 1992 Conference featured Jerlean Daniel, NAEYC President, and the 1993 one featured Valora Washington, Vice President of the Kellogg Foundation. All staff of accredited programs in Rhode Island were invited and recognized for their accomplishments. Each program received a copy of Marian Wright Edelman's book, *A Letter to My Children*. The conferences focused on topics that explored quality through accreditation: staffing, curriculum, learning environments, home-school connections, adult-child interactions, the self-study process, developmentally appropriate practice for infants and toddlers, to name a few! Participants previewed videos, resources, and NAEYC publications exploring accreditation and improving quality programming. Over two years, more than 300 early childhood professionals attended these conferences.

A series of presentations entitled, "NAEYC Accreditation: A Tool for Success" were held in accredited programs throughout the state and provided Rhode Island early educators the opportunity to learn more about accreditation and visit accredited sites. Staff, directors, and the mentor from Rhode Island gave presentations. Sometimes a director came one evening and brought the entire staff to the next program!

The training system offers a course, "Head Teacher Academy,"(with three credits provided through Rhode Island College). The course provides support for head teachers in center-based programs to improve quality through continued supervisory and curriculum development roles. The head teachers will train and supervise staff in curriculum development and implementation of high-quality programs.

REACCREDITATION *continued from page 9*

and extensive experience teaching the whole language approach. She has brought a wealth of children's books enhancing our library and the experiences children have. This teacher is also a storyteller and involves the children in stretching their imaginations, developing their listening skills, and expanding their awareness of books, stories, and printed materials.

The center also moved into the world of computers. We are becoming literate in this technology, although the children are far ahead of the director in this learning experience! Our children amaze us with their abilities using the mouse, learning the computer terms, and bursting with enjoyment. The other skills they gained are confidence and cooperation through sharing in small groups while they are having fun.

Writing this letter has affirmed that we indeed meet and exceed the required Criteria. We are a quality program and are proud to be an accredited program. This practice of putting our accomplishments on paper has helped me reflect and look forward to getting even better!

Career Encounters: Early Childhood Education Is Set for November Release

Sponsored by NAEYC and supported by funds from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *Career Encounters: Early Childhood Education* will inform parents, teachers, and counselors about the pivotal role professional early childhood educators play in the lives of children today. The program is a production of Davis Gray, Inc.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts 611,000 job openings for early childhood educators by 2005. This new videotape introduces the diverse career opportunities in the field and features several accredited programs and professionals active in the accreditation system. The program explains the skills and education necessary to perform the range of challenging jobs available within in the field.

The program will reach a nationwide audience through educational and public television. NAEYC will premiere the program at its Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday, December 1, at 7:30 p.m. The videotape will be available for purchase in NAEYC's *Spring 1995 Early Childhood Resources Catalog* in time for programs and communities to feature it during the 25th Annual Week of the Young Child, April 23 to 29, 1995.

We would like to thank longtime validator and commissioner, Mary Hanrahan, for suggesting this partnership to Davis Gray, Inc., and NAEYC.

Getting What You Paid For

by Meg Brulatour

The following article, written by a parent whose children are enrolled at Grace and Holy Trinity Child Care Center (see page 9), appeared in The City Paper, *Richmond, Virginia. This article demonstrates how important high-quality programs are for families and how much at least one parent understands the trilemma facing child care: quality, compensation, and affordability.*

This may be a familiar scenario: Rise and shine! It's another workin' day . . . roust the spouse; head down the hall, first call for the kids. Downstairs, coffee's on, cereal's poured, second call for kids. Quick jolt of hot caffeine, then upstairs for the manual disengagement of children from beds. (This is a *weekday*, remember? Only on Sundays are they up with the sun.) Downstairs: switch on "BARNEY," set down cereal, settle dispute, tie shoes. Bolt back upstairs to brush, bathe, and beautify (ha! a little Mom humor there) and swear that tonight you will lay out tomorrow's clothes. Back downstairs to wipe up milk, fix barrettes, five-minute favorite toy search, consider putting your morning mantra on tape ("Girls, I'm **really** running late!") and OUT THE DOOR to the child care center.

Sweet relief! To be able to hand over your precious own flesh and blood to the always cheerful, ever inventive, endlessly patient care providers. To head off to work secure in the knowledge your darlings will be watched over, nurtured, cuddled, taught, and cherished by people who have taken hours of special courses, are scrutinized by various state and city inspectors, are willing to undertake a huge responsibility day after day and make about five bucks an hour. Hmmmm . . . what's wrong with this picture?

My two girls attend a wonderful child care center. Grace and Holy Trinity Child Care Center is an accredited, clean, homey facility dedicated to providing children a warm, safe environment where they can proceed with learning how to live. It recognizes no social, economic, or racial lines. It encourages exploration and expression. It deserves far more than a paragraph or two and it wouldn't exist without these incredible people who are willing to try to pay rent, buy food, take care of medical needs, ETC., on a nearly minimum wage salary. And check the benefits your child care center is able to offer employees. I was unpleasantly surprised. It seems a very small payoff, particularly for work that requires such constant enthusiasm, creativity, and attention to detail.

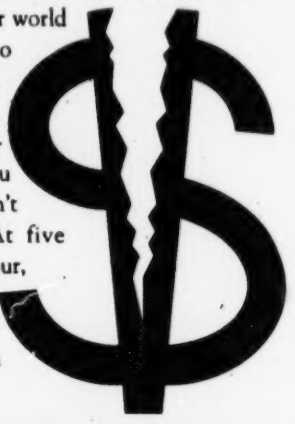
When I asked the care providers why they chose and stayed in the field, the essence of all replies boiled down to "I love it." They wonder why the care of children is so undervalued in this country, they get frustrated when red tape bogs down food programs, and they wish that waiting tables wasn't more profitable than tending kids. But luckily for the parents that depend on them they have a great sense of doing something worthwhile.

Certainly some aspects of the work must be thrilling: to realize they play an absolutely vital role in the lives of others should be impressive. In fact, they actually allow other people to live their lives. What happened to your day-to-day routine last winter when your child care had to open late or even remain closed because the streets were paved with ice? (Not to brag, but when the public schools shut down for **days** at a time during all that ice and misery, Grace and Holy Trinity closed only twice.)

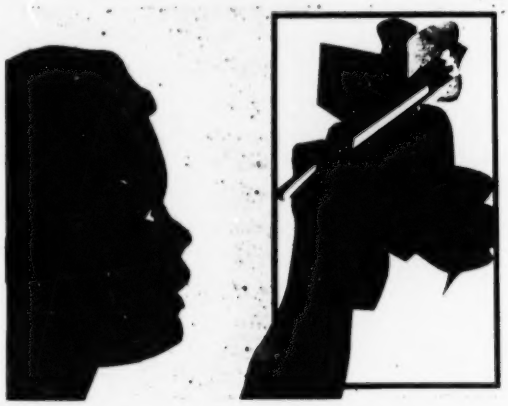
And there is that sense of shaping the future, of providing that particular spark to light the creative genius that will in turn truly change the world. Maybe it will be a brilliant bonfire, the catalyst behind an Einstein, Picasso, Baryshnikov, or Edison. Or maybe it will just be a good, warm glow and the child will grow up to be the kind of woman or man who cares about friends and family and trying to do the right things to make the world a little better for everyone, especially kids, and the people who care for them.

Maybe that kind of person is you. Maybe you'd be interested in something called the Worthy Wage Campaign, a grassroots organization with a five-year plan to reverse what is becoming a care crisis. If you're interested in increasing the value and respect for those providing early childhood care through better wages, benefits, working conditions, and training opportunities, as well as making sure high-quality child care is affordable and accessible to all children, then you should call the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force at 202-737-7700. Express your concerns to local and state representatives.

If you don't have kids but still have read this far, here's one last thought: The kids who are being cared for (or not!) today are the same ones who will be running your world at a not too much later date and possibly caring for you when you can't anymore. At five bucks an hour, you're **not** gonna get fries with that.



Week of the Young Child Is 25 Years Old!



April 23 to 29, 1995, marks the 25th anniversary of the Week of the Young Child. Join the celebration! NAEYC proudly announces a new theme for next year—**Early Years Are Learning Years: Make Them Count!** An array of colorful new resources, listed in NAEYC's *Fall 1994 Early Childhood Resources Catalog*, are available to help you make the week the biggest and best yet!

This year's theme focuses attention on the importance of the early years for children's learning and all aspects of development. It also issues a call for action to parents, early childhood educators and allied professionals, business leaders, community leaders, and the public at large to make the critical early years the best that they can be for all children.

The theme and materials are especially appropriate for accredited programs to educate families and their communities about the value of their work. Early years ARE learning years in developmentally appropriate programs. Be sure to order **Circle of Children** gold-tone lapel pins (NAEYC #655) as special gifts for staff and supporters of your program.

See you in Atlanta at NAEYC's Annual Conference—November 30–December 3, 1994

New Resources to Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning

Two new resources are available from the National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse (NMCHC): *Nutrition and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention: A Quick Reference Guide for Health Providers* and the companion *Nutrition and Lead Bibliography*. Because recent findings suggest that elevated blood lead levels in young children are related to decreased cognitive performance, attention is being focused on prevention. These publications are part of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's (MCHB) effort to clarify the relationship between nutrition and lead poisoning prevention. They were produced by the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH) in collaboration with the MCHB.

Single copies are available for free from National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse (NMCHC), 8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 600, McLean, VA 22102, 703-821-8955, ext. 254.

These publications should be useful to those working to improve maternal/child health and nutrition. Please direct comments to Denise Sofka, 301-443-6600 or Carol Suitor, Project Director, NCEMCH, 703-524-7802.

The* ACADEMY *Update
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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 9 Number 2 Spring 1995

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers a professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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202-328-2601 800-424-2460

naeyc

New Child Care Study Supports Accreditation

A TEAM OF ECONOMISTS AND EXPERTS in child development released the results of a 1½-year study of child care centers in four states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, and North Carolina—on February 6. The study is particularly important because it comes at a time when Congress is considering renewal of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, along with changes in welfare policy that will increase the demand for child care.

The *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* study is a national wake-up call, according to Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D., NAEYC President. "Five million American preschool children attend child care centers. The good news is that we know how to promote children's learning and healthy development in child care centers. Unfortunately, market factors constrain many programs from offering the good care that all children deserve. As a result, less than 2 of every 10 centers provide developmentally appropriate care to the children they serve." The sad fact, according to Daniel, is that the effort to keep child care "affordable" comes at the expense of children's development and learning. Nevertheless, even the price of mediocre child care is still out of reach for many working families.

The researchers found that "the level of quality at most child care centers does not meet children's needs for health, safety, warm relationships, and learning." Seven out of ten centers provided "minimal quality" care; children's basic health and safety needs are met, but children get little warmth from the adults who care for them and do not have the opportunity to take part in activities that enhance their learning. In 12% of the centers, children's health and safety needs are not being met. Quality in centers caring for infants and toddlers was even worse. There only 8% were providing good quality, and 40% were rated as "less than minimal."

The researchers also identified the elements of center-based care that do enhance children's opportunities to grow and learn: higher staff-to-child ratios, staff education, administrator experience, and teacher wages. States with higher licensing standards had fewer poor-quality centers, and **centers that meet voluntary accreditation requirements, such as those put forth by NAEYC, were also providing higher quality.**

These findings are consistent with several earlier studies of child care quality, including the *National Child Care Staffing Study* and *The Study of Children in*

continued on page 2

STUDY *continued from page 1*

Family Child Care and Relative Care.

Some key points and implications for public policy include the following:

1. This study underscores the need to ensure that parents have access to good information about how to evaluate child care centers and the time to observe programs while they are in operation. The study also quantifies the gap between what quality costs and what parents can afford to pay—a gap that is currently being bridged by an inadequate array of private and public investments and child care teachers who work for low wages.

2. The study provides a blueprint for programs that want to improve quality: hire better-educated staff and pay higher wages, ensure that there are enough adults in each classroom to pay close and caring attention to children, and train and retain competent directors. The study illustrates why such solutions are beyond the capacity of many centers; centers cannot charge higher fees to parents who are already stretched to the limit to meet current fees. The research suggests that the child care market does not operate efficiently because parents don't have adequate information to evaluate their options, nor do most of them have the money to pay higher fees.

3. Good quality helps all children grow, develop, and be ready for school. Poor-quality child care can harm children, regardless of family income level or level of parental education.

4. The findings from this study are consistent with studies of children in family child care and relative care. Given the gap between what quality costs and what parents can afford, and the damage that poor quality child care can do to children's health and capacity to be ready for school, employers and the government should increase their investments in child care. Current proposals to reduce overall funding, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant that helps working families pay for child care, are ill-timed and ill-considered. This is not the time to remove guarantees for child care assistance for families making the transition from welfare to work. All of these studies make the case for increased investment in child care from employers and local, state, and the federal government, to supplement parent fees.

The report received excellent media coverage (see editorial on page 7). Some early childhood advocates were distressed by the timing of the study, fearing that its dismal findings regarding quality may only reinforce the feelings of decisionmakers who do not want to make the needed investments in quality early childhood programs. Other advocates seized the opportunity to capture public attention and to emphasize the importance of investing in good programs, the importance of public regulation, and the value of accreditation.

In Connecticut, a group of Connecticut AEYC members met with study investigators Sharon Lynn Kagan and Jean Rustici to brainstorm advocacy strategies to build upon the study's findings for Connecticut. They prepared a mailing to all licensed programs in the state that included basic information about the study's findings and provided a draft letter for parents (reprinted below).

To order the *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Executive Summary*—send your name and address, along with a check or money order for $8 payable to "Cost and Quality Study," to Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study, Economics Department, Campus Box 159, P.O. Box 173364, University of Colorado at Denver, Denver, CO 80217-3364; telephone 303-556-4934.

(Adapt as needed to fit your program)

Dear Parent,

Recently, the results of a national study on child care were released and widely covered in the media. You may have seen the articles that reported that "the level of quality at most child care centers does not meet children's needs for health, safety, warm relationships, and learning." In fact, the results show that 7 out of 10 centers provided "minimal" quality care.

To ease any concern you might have, I want to make you aware of the measures that our program has put in place to ensure a high level of quality. In identifying the elements that enhance children's growth and learning, the researchers provided a checklist of sorts by which we can measure programs. Better quality was found in those programs that had higher staff-to-child ratios, staff education, administrator experience, teacher wages, and licensing standards, and that meet some type of voluntary accreditation requirements such as those of NAEYC.

In this program, each classroom has an additional staff member beyond what is required by our state's licensing standards. The teaching staff are college educated, and a training and development plan is in place for each member to keep abreast of current knowledge. The chief administrator has more than 10 years experience working with young children and families. Our teacher wages are currently under review, and we are working on a plan to improve our compensation levels. Licensing standards, in general, in Connecticut are higher than the rest of the nation, but we see them only as a minimum from which to build. Finally, our program has completed the self-study portion of NAEYC's accreditation.

The results of this study do underscore the need for you as a parent to continue to be an active participant and partner in our program. Together with you, we can continue to learn, grow, and further our commitment to young children and the profession.

(Director's signature)

Congress Considers Major Cuts in Child Care, Other Services

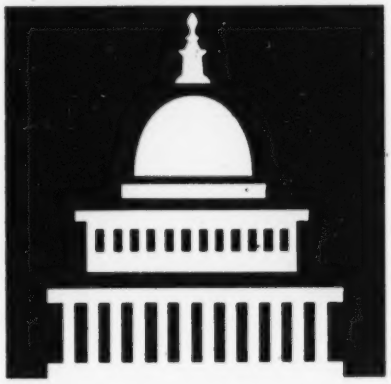
ON Friday, March 24, the House approved the *Personal Responsibility* Act (H.R. 4).

This bill includes two significant child care components, a Child Care Block Grant and a Family-Based Nutrition Block Grant, both of which would make devastating cuts in funding for child care and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). States would lose $1.6 billion in child care funds and more than $5 billion in lost CACFP funds over the next five years. At the same time, the House proposal requires that 50% of mothers on welfare work or participate in training (thus significantly increasing the demand for child care).

Aspects of House-approved Child Care Block Grant

This block grant would

- Consolidate the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), AFDC child care, Transitional Child Care, At-Risk Child Care, Dependent Care Block Grant, and the Child Development Associate Scholarship Program into a single program.
- Eliminate the guarantee that children whose parents leave welfare to work or whose parents participate in AFDC work/training activities will receive child care assistance.
- Cut funds for all child care by $1.6 billion over five years, according to HHS estimates. The bill authorizes $2.1 billion for child care for each fiscal year from 1996 through 2000. (Current estimates of child care expenditures in FY 1995 are $2.2 billion.) States could choose to spend up to $400 million (20%) for non-child care services.
- Remove the quality set-aside in the CCDBG (5% of current funds) and would not require states to dedicate any resources to improve the quality and/or build the supply of child care.
- Remove the CCDBG requirement



that states ensure that all providers (except grandparents, aunts, and uncles) receiving federal funds meet minimum health and safety requirements.

Child Care Food Program would suffer serious cuts

The Family-Based Nutrition Block Grant, the second major child care component in the *Personal Responsibility Act*, eliminates the guarantee that children enrolled in child care centers, Head Start programs, and family child care homes receive nutritious meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The CACFP becomes optional for states and therefore is likely to be eliminated in many states.

For information on the status of these and other early childhood measures, contact NAEYC's Public Affairs Division at 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460.

Virginia Approves Preschool Accreditation in Lieu of Licensing

Recently, the Commonwealth of Virginia assigned licensure of preschools, formerly conducted by the Department of Education, to the Department of Social Service. The state also passed a law exempting preschools from licensure under certain conditions: if the preschool is accredited by NAEYC; enrolls no child younger than 3 years old; is not a child care center; holds a certificate that addresses health, safety, and programmatic requirements; and requires annual inspections. For more information, contact the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Social Services at 800-552-7085.

New Video Increases Public Awareness

Career Encounters: Early Childhood Education introduces career opportunities in the field of early childhood education and also increases public awareness about the challenging work of early childhood teachers. Early childhood professionals discuss their roles and work settings, including a Head Start teacher, corporate child care administrators, a public school teacher, an infant/toddler caregiver, a family child care provider, and a university professor. The video explores the skills and education needed to perform a range of challenging jobs within the early childhood profession and demonstrates high-quality early childhood care and education in action. The program depicts the pivotal role early childhood educators play in the lives of children. The program airs regularly on public broadcasting stations. The videotape is available from NAEYC, order #815, $39.

Diversity and Accreditation Standards: Congruent or *Conflicting?*

As NAEYC revises its position statements on developmentally appropriate practice, among the issues being explored is the applicability of the principles in diverse cultural contexts. This discussion is especially relevant for the accreditation system where, on a daily basis, directors and validators must resolve apparent conflicts between principles of professional practice and cultural values and child-rearing practices in communities. The difficulty of this task was identified for the Academy staff by a director who wrote to us following a validation visit and a negative accreditation decision:

> The validators found different people, different behaviors, and different accents. They didn't see all the familiar patterns of interacting with children they know as sanctioned, approved American standards of quality child care practices uniformly throughout the center. Different seemed to become deficient. Many of our non-valid(ated) items had to do with language and how we use it with children. But our language practices reflect our commitment to recognizing and valuing the diversity of our staff. In practice, we were being criticized for our attempts to preserve our cultural differences for the benefit of ourselves, our children, and families.

Following the first visit, the director attempted to work with staff to transform behaviors to conform to accreditation standards. Here are her reflections following this process:

> . . . how did staff feel about the system we used to do better during our revisit? They said things like, "Everyone had to follow one system." "Everyone had to fit in." "There's no room for flexibility with the rules." Someone used the word *robotic* to describe how she felt when she followed my new rules for behavior, and that word was repeated over and over. "We had to follow a script." "We knew we had to perform." "We had to be perfect." Many referred to being under scrutiny by the administrative team and to having to watch and critique each other all the time. The assistant director talked about feeling like a drill sergeant. Our nurse spoke about the tension she felt she was creating. More comments from teachers: "I can't operate from the heart anymore. Things feel so unnatural." "They took our diversity away from us." "They want pictures of different kinds of people on our walls, but we have to be all the same." "They don't know what diversity is." "There is a value to having a diversified staff with different languages, music, etc." "They altered the way we respond to the children's individuality because we have to respond to situations by a formula." "If we all have to be the same, we deny ourselves our background." "The way I have to talk makes me feel so unnatural. Caregiving should be natural." "We can't trust our instincts any more."

The director gave more information about the process and concluded with these comments:

> So where are we now? The next step is to once again go back to those areas where we have been working so hard to modify behaviors and evaluate each one. Working from our philosophy and our curriculum, we need to decide for ourselves what we think is valid behavior for each criterion in light of the value we place on diversity and on enabling people to express the richness of their own background and experiences. This needs to be a very frank and honest process in which we all participate. We need to hear everyone's opinion and make some decisions about what we think is in the best interests of our children and families. I think now we can get on with a more positive aspect of this process. We should be a much stronger institution by the end.

The director of this program seems to have resolved the apparent conflict as we recommend all such conflicts should be resolved. The individuals involved should see the difference of opinion or interpretation as the beginning of a dialogue, rather than the end of one. Children's development and learning occurs in and is influenced by cultural contexts. Decisions about what is developmentally appropriate must be made in consideration of an actual group of children, within a context, and with respect to individual children. Through the process of dialogue, no one side in the conflict "wins." Rather, both perspectives must be adjusted and perhaps adapted to determine what is most appropriate in this context.

The accreditation system was originally designed to accommodate diverse perspectives. Validators should observe (from the point of view of the child) and compare their observations to those reported by the program staff. When there is a difference in rating, the director has an opportunity to explain the program's perspective for the external review by commissioners. Such an opportunity for thoughtful reflection of differences apparently did not occur for the program described here. By sharing their concerns with *Academy Update* readers, we hope to encourage a larger dialogue within our profession about interpretation of differences and resolution of apparent contradictions between what is generally believed about development and learning and what is culturally congruent for children.

CPSC Alert to Remove Animal Swings

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and a group of seven playground equipment manufacturers together have launched an effort to get potentially dangerous, heavy metal and molded plastic "animal" swings removed from playgrounds. The swings were installed between 1951 and 1991 and were involved in the death of two children and injury of many others.

The swings, which are made of cast aluminum or molded plastic, are painted to look like horses, zebras, pelicans, ducks, turtles, seals, rockets, and other figures.

For more information about the alert and incentive plans by manufacturers to replace the swings, please contact Elaine Tyrrell, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207, 301-504-0580, ext. 1191.

Important Change to Validation Procedures

In many states, laws protect the confidentiality of staff personnel and child health records. In these situations, programs that seek accreditation cannot be required to provide access to these documents for validators. To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria regarding staff and children's records, directors should provide written certification by an authorized agency or individual (such as a licensing monitor) of the documents' existence and compliance with the criteria. This certification should also indicate how the records do not comply with the criteria, if this is the case. Validators should accept written certification and make validation decisions accordingly. See page 75 of *Guide to Accreditation* for the statement covering validation of documents that are unavailable for validator review.

Early Head Start Grant Applications Available

Early Head Start is a newly created part of the federal Head Start program designed to provide early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services on a year-round basis to low-income families with children younger than age 3 and pregnant women. The goals for Early Head Start are (1) promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth of infants and toddlers and prepare them for future growth and development; (2) support parents—mothers, fathers, and guardians—in their role as

continued on page 6

Military Child Care Study Finds Accreditation Benefits

A new study evaluating the effects of accreditation on military child development centers found that accreditation provides "unique benefits" in addition to the effects of the Department of Defense certification standards which regulate the programs.

In November 1989, Congress passed the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for 1990 and 1991. The law was designed to improve the availability and quality of child care services in the military. An additional goal of the act was to standardize the delivery and quality of care across installations and military services, which in 1989 varied considerably.

Much of the act focused on changes in staffing, training, compensation, and funding. But the MCCA also contained a provision that required at least 50 military child development centers (CDCs) to be accredited in accordance with the standards of a national accrediting body for early childhood programs.

To evaluate their progress RAND's National Defense Institute studied the effect of accreditation on CDC operations and outcomes. The report entitled *Examining the Effects of Accreditation on Military Child Development Center Operation and Outcomes* states that "the effect of accreditation was judged by nearly all to be overwhelmingly positive." CDC staff cited higher staff morale and pride as the greatest benefit. Other benefits of accreditation were program improvements such as better-defined goals, higher-quality care, and more innovative programs. Greater respect and approval from either the civilian or military community was also frequently cited as a valuable benefit of accreditation.

Comparison of Department of Defense certification standards with NAEYC Criteria revealed considerable overlap. But the study found that NAEYC's requirements go beyond the minimum standards and provide explicit instructions for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, environment, staff-parent interactions, developmentally appropriate activities, and evaluation. The researchers concluded that "NAEYC standards expressly consider the goals of child care, rather than focusing on meeting specific requirements. In this way, the accreditation process becomes oriented toward providing good quality care rather than passing a checklist mandated by law. As such, accreditation complements and builds on certification standards."

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Networking for Accreditation Support Projects

In communities throughout the country, early childhood professionals are working to promote accreditation. In November 1994, approximately 80 people attended a networking session at the NAEYC Conference in Atlanta where they discussed strategies to help programs obtain the financial support and training necessary to make improvements to achieve accreditation. The Academy staff is compiling a list of accreditation support projects to help accreditation supporters exchange ideas. To include your project, please send the following information to Stacey Knox at NAEYC Headquarters. Include the contact person's name, address, and telephone number.

1. Briefly describe your accreditation support project.
2. How is the accreditation support funded? Who funds the project?
3. What is the time span of the funding of this project?
4. Do you anticipate the project will continue? Please elaborate.
5. How many early childhood programs participate in your accreditation support project?
6. What support do the early childhood programs receive? (For example, self-study fees, validation fees, materials/equipment, technical assistance, staff training, consultant fees, facility upgrades, other.) Please describe.
7. Is there a time limit for program participation?
8. Is funding contingent on receipt of accreditation?
9. What happens if accreditation is deferred until improvements are made?
10. What is your role in supporting this project? Do you have additional support?
11. How often do you meet with the program that is pursuing accreditation? In what capacity?
12. How are you evaluating the effectiveness of the support project? What data do you collect?
13. What are your biggest obstacles?
14. How can the Academy support your project?

Academy staff appreciate your time and commitment to NAEYC accreditation. We look forward to hearing about your accreditation support project.

Using Technology with Young Children

Do computers belong in the early childhood curriculum? "You bet!" say the leading experts on children and technology who contributed to NAEYC's new book, ***Young Children: Active Learners in a Technological Age*** (#341, $8), edited by June L. Wright and Daniel D. Shade. This valuable resource tells *why* computers, when used properly, belong in early childhood programs and *how* to integrate technology to benefit children's cognitive and social development.

EARLY HEAD START *continued from page 5*

primary caregivers and educators of their children, and in meeting family goals and achieving self-sufficiency across a wide variety of domains; (3) strengthen community supports for families with young children; and (4) develop highly trained, caring, and adequately compensated program staff, because the quality of staff and their relationships with children and parents are critical to achieving all other goals.

The March 17, 1995, *Federal Register* describes the application process for the competitive awards. Eligible applicants include current Head Start programs—including Head Start Parent and Child Centers and Comprehensive Child Development programs—and other public and nonprofit private entities. The closing date for submission of applications is **May 31, 1995.**

Validator Trainings Are Scheduled

We greatly appreciate the contributions of those who serve as validators. Individuals who attend validator training agree to conduct a minimum of three (1- or 2-day) visits per year. Please be aware of this time commitment before attending, and confirm with your employer that you may take leave to conduct validation visits. Many employers consider validation visits a professional development experience.

The following trainings are planned for individuals who are interested in serving as validators and for individuals who have been previously trained but need a refresher on procedures.

April 20, 1995—North Central MA, New England AEYC Conference

May 4, 1995—Westchester, NY, New York AEYC Conference

May 18, 1995—Cincinnati, OH, Ohio AEYC Conference

May 18, 1995—Fargo, ND, Midwest AEYC Conference

October 11, 1995—Dallas, TX, Texas AEYC Conference

October 25, 1995—Arlington, IL, R*/TAS IL Conference

November 28, 1995—Washington, DC, NAEYC Annual Conference

If you would like to apply to become a validator, please request an application from the Academy. Validators need at least a baccalaureate degree in early childhood and experience administering a program for young children. Directors of accredited programs are encouraged to become validators.

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Still Accredited After All These Years . . .

NAEYC's accreditation system will celebrate its 10th year of operation in 1995. In April 1986, the first 19 programs achieved NAEYC accreditation. Of those programs, 16 (84%) are still accredited after all these years! Many of these programs have the same directors, but others have new directors who are also committed to continuous quality improvement. Congratulations to these programs:

Accotink Academy Preschool
Springfield, VA, Jean Rice

Chugiak Children's Services
Chugiak, AK, Sandra Butera

Chula Vista Presbyterian Preschool
Chula Vista, CA, Nancy Reeves

Community Congregational Preschool
Chula Vista, CA, Angie Gish

Early Childhood Center of the Rochester School for the Deaf
Rochester, NY, Lorrie Pasetto

First English Lutheran Nursery School
Mishawaka, IN, Jeannette James

Hutcheson Child Care Center
Fort Oglethorpe, GA, Jill Cofer

The L & N School
Dallas, TX, Kate Wheeler

Northaven Co-operative Preschool and Kindergarten
Dallas, TX, Kathleen Delsanter

Northside Child Development Center
Columbus, OH, Cynthia Sturni

Perry-Kay Nursery School and Kindergarten, Inc.
Southfield, MI, Katherine Koulouras

Rutgers-Livingston Day Care Center, Inc.
New Brunswick, NJ, Cheryl Devine

Second Presbyterian Church Child Care Center
Richmond, VA, Susan Corbett

Small World Early Learning Center
Salina, KS, Marilyn Ericson

St. Paul's Cooperative Nursery School
Burlingame, CA, Patricia Bertapelle

University View Child Care Center
Fairfax, VA, Pam Garrity

Having a bad care day? Parents need to demand accreditation of child care centers

Working parents got more bad news this week with the release of a bleak new study about child care. The national study found that most centers provide only mediocre care, and one in eight is downright bad.

Just last year a study found that people who run day care businesses in their homes weren't all doing a great job either. That study rated 9 percent of family day care "good" and 35 percent "inadequate."

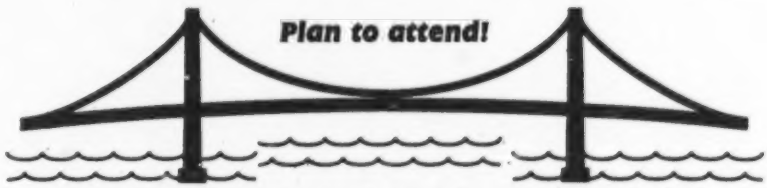
What are parents to do? They could quit their jobs and stay home, but that's no solution for most working families. Besides, we have yet to see a study that rates full-time parents. What percentage of them read to kids, provide them with age-appropriate educational toys, feed them nutritious meals and protect them from all health and safety hazards?

The latest study is not an indictment of all day care centers. It is a warning to parents to be better consumers. Good care is out there, and parents need to look for it and demand it. The study found that the best centers have the most qualified staff, highest teacher-to-child ratios and the lowest staff turnover. It's not a coincidence that they also offer the best salaries and benefits.

A cursory visit to a day care center isn't enough to determine quality. Neither is a state license. But the state doesn't monitor quality. Just as a licensed hair stylist can give a bad haircut, a licensed center can provide inadequate care.

Centers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children must meet rigid quality standards. If more parents demanded accreditation, more centers would strive to meet those standards.

Editorial reprinted from *San Jose Mercury News*, February 9, 1995.



NAEYC's National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

Fourth Annual Conference

San Francisco Hilton & Towers ◆ June 21–24, 1995

Join your colleagues in San Francisco to

- **explore key content issues for professional preparation, revisions to Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and professional preparation standards;**
- **focus on the sociopolitical context of early childhood programs and professional preparation to ensure equity, adequate financing, and good quality for all children and professionals; and**
- **strengthen your own personal professional development.**

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Foundation Supports Professional Development for Directors and Quality for Children

THE Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation has awarded a grant to the Early Childhood Professional Development Project of National-Louis University to provide training and technical assistance to 16 child care center directors in the Chicago area. This grant, a part of the Foundation's Focus on Quality initiative, is designed to improve the leadership and management skills of directors in child care programs in the Chicago area and to increase the number of accredited early childhood programs in Chicago's low-income communities.

During the next two years, the 16 McCormick Fellows will be enrolled in the Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy master's degree program at National-Louis University. The project will provide individual consultation and field supervision to assist their programs through the self-study phase of NAEYC accreditation. The grant will cover accreditation fees as well as provide quality enhancement grants to help the programs come into compliance with NAEYC standards.

Research and professional wisdom recognize child care directors as the "gatekeepers to quality" as they set the standards and expectations for teachers. Directors influence the climate of programs both as a workplace for the teaching staff and as an educational and nurturing environment for children. Unfortunately, few directors have any formal training in the principles of early childhood program administration. Current Illinois state licensing standards do not require training in administration for center directors. The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program focuses on the nature of individual, organizational, and systemic change and the early childhood leader's role as change agent. The program offers a comprehensive and integrated model for improving the quality of early childhood programs.

Participating directors demonstrated strong leadership potential, commitment to the field of early childhood education, and interest in improving their programs through accreditation. The centers represent a broad spectrum of programs including full-day and half-day Head Start programs; child care programs serving infants and toddlers; and pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and after-school programs. The programs vary in size from 27 to 289 children.

The McCormick Fellows began their 24-month program of study in January 1995. The grant field supervisor visited the centers, observed classrooms, distributed work environment surveys to staff, and obtained self-study materials. Everyone is enthusiastic about the challenges that come with improving quality.

Healthy Young Children—A Manual for Programs
1995 Edition

Use this basic manual, designed in an easy-to-use format, to promote and protect the health and safety of children, staff, and families in child care programs. The 1995 edition includes the most recent information related to health and safety policies and practices and should replace all earlier editions of this publication.

Order NAEYC #704, $15

The ACADEMY *Update*
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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 10 Number 1 Fall 1995

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers a professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

naeyc

Major Corporations to Invest $100 Million in Dependent Care

IN A POWERFUL DECLARATION OF SUPPORT for their employees, 21 major corporations announced on September 14, 1995, that they are jointly launching a $100 million initiative to develop and strengthen school-age, child care, and elder care projects in communities across the country. The initiative, announced by the Champion companies of the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care, is believed to be the largest investment ever in dependent care for the private sector.

The companies are expected to take the lead in funding more than 1,000 projects over the next six years in a massive, collaborative effort that includes support for research and development for national pilot programs, including a voice technology project for public schools. The funds will provide support for a broad array of projects ranging from training for child care providers and science/technology camps for school-age children to a money management program for senior citizens. The partners in the American Business Collaboration are among the strongest supporters of NAEYC accreditation in local communities, offering scholarships for accreditation fees, improvement grants to help programs achieve accreditation, and grants to accredited programs.

In a strongly worded, joint statement signed by the chief executive officers of all the Champion companies, the officers made it clear that their support for dependent care was based on bottom line business factors. "We believe that supporting the diverse dependent care needs of our employees is critical to our success as it enables our companies to attract and retain a productive, competitive, committed, and motivated workforce," they said.

"We do this because the availability of quality dependent care programs . . . enables our employees to do their best at work by helping them manage their work and personal responsibilities," the officers remarked. The statement was signed by the CEOs of Aetna Life & Casualty, Allstate Insurance, American Express, Amoco, AT&T, Bank of America, Chevron, Citibank, Deloitte & Touche LLP, Eastman Kodak, Exxon, GE Capital Services, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Mobil, NYNEX, Price Waterhouse LLP, Texaco, Texas Instruments, and Xerox.

This announcement actually begins the second phase of the American

continued on page 2

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CORPORATIONS *continued from page 1*

Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care, a national effort launched three years ago this month to increase the supply and enhance the quality of child and elder care programs throughout the country. Ellen Galinsky, co-president of the nonprofit Families and Work Institute, said the scope of the additional funding will have a "dramatic impact on the dependent care community" and called the initiative, "a very sound investment" for the participating companies. "Our studies clearly demonstrate that for every dollar companies spend on work-life programs, they get back a return in terms of retention, reduced stress, and greater loyalty," added Galinsky.

Mary Kay Leonard, a vice president for Work/Family Directions, a Boston-based consulting firm that facilitates the collaborative process, said that the new phase will build on the lessons learned during the first three years. She said there will be a greater emphasis on quality improvement, increased focus on developing services that meet the specific needs of working parents such as extended hours for child care programs, and a sharp increase in projects specifically designed for school-age children.

Plan to attend!

NAEYC's National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

Fifth Annual Conference
Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 5–8, 1996

Meet the Academy Staff

Staff change is inevitable in early childhood programs, and the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is certainly not immune to this phenomenon. In the last year we have experienced growth as well as change. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce Academy staff to our *Update* audience. These new staff members have joined us in the last year:

Lisa Bullock is Accreditation Coordinator for DE, KY, MD, NJ, NY, OH, PA.

Olivia Dicks is Accreditation Coordinator for AL, AR, CO, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX.

Nichele Kirchner is Accreditation Coordinator for AK, AZ, CA, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY.

Julie Rivinus is Accreditation Coordinator for DC, FL, GA, NC, SC, VA, WV.

Theresa Wood is Accreditation Coordinator for CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT.

Aaron Lancaster is Accreditation Assistant, responsible for self-study orders and promotional materials.

Traci Walker is Accreditation Assistant, responsible for validator training coordination.

Some of the more familiar voices in the Academy are still with us. **Sue Bredekamp** is Director of Professional Development and Accreditation. **Stacey Knox** is Deputy Director of the Academy. **Saundra Gilbert** is Assistant Director for Programs. **Kim Means** is Assistant Director for Special Projects. **Darlene Daniels** is Accreditation Specialist, responsible for IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, WI, SD. **Stephanie Glowacki** is a part-time Accreditation Specialist.

Note these Special Accreditation Sessions at the 1995 Annual Conference

The 1995 NAEYC Conference in Washington, D.C., November 29 to December 2, includes a complete track of sessions on accreditation, opportunities to meet with staff individually in a central location, and these special sessions:

Lessons learned from accreditation. 1995 marks the 10th anniversary of NAEYC accreditation. This session, on Wednesday, November 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, will present lessons learned from some of the research and experience with accreditation over the last 10 years.

Accreditation networking session. Academy staff will meet with individuals and groups that are involved in projects that promote accreditation and assist early childhood programs with accreditation on Thursday, November 30, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. If you are unable to attend this session but have information about an accreditation support project, please contact the Academy. This information will be used to help develop an accreditation networking directory.

Fourth Year of Accreditation Is Possible for Consistently High-Quality Programs

In 1993, NAEYC's Governing Board approved a fourth year merit extension of accreditation. The merit extension is intended to be a reward given to programs that have maintained accreditation for a period of six years or longer and have met the following criteria:

- The same director is present from the previous accreditation cycle.
- Staff turnover is low.
- Compliance with Criteria is high.
- No complaints have been verified.
- Accreditation has never been deferred.

Program directors who wish to receive a fourth year merit extension must submit in writing the following:

- A letter describing their program, including a brief history of accreditation.
- Current staffing pattern and staff qualification charts. (These charts may be photocopied from the *Guide to Accreditation*.)

Academy staff will review the materials to determine whether the request meets the conditions outlined above.

New book!

Reaching Potentials: Transforming Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment—Volume 2.

edited by S. Bredekamp and T. Rosegrant

This long-awaited second volume applies NAEYC Curriculum and Assessment Guidelines to the newly developed national curriculum standards of all the major subject matter disciplines. NAEYC #227, $8

Academy Begins Criteria Review

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs periodically reviews the accreditation Criteria to ensure that they are accurate, current, inclusive, and effective in identifying high-quality programs for young children. Periodic review of standards is an essential component of a credible accreditation system. The most recent revision of the Criteria was in 1991. It is now time to launch another review of the Criteria.

The original Criteria and the first revision were based on extensive review of current research and practice, with input from thousands of NAEYC members. A similar process is being used for this Criteria review. Suggested revisions should be sent to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters by **March 15, 1996.**

Please be sure that your suggestions are specific. For example, "Make the Criteria more family friendly" is too general. Think about the concept of family friendliness and how it can be defined in terms of the staff and parent interaction components.

Academy Advisory Panel members expressed concern that expanding the Criteria in too many ways would dilute the focus on children and especially cautioned that we not add significantly to the length and complexity of the tool. Therefore, directors and validators should examine the current Criteria and suggest which criteria could potentially be omitted without compromising the integrity of the system. The Academy Advisory Panel will thoroughly review all recommended revisions to analyze the potential impact of the changes. The proposed revisions will be described in the *Academy Update* and *Young Children* for public review and comment.

Following is a summary of areas where revisions to the Criteria have already been suggested:

1 **Administrative issues** (The current Criteria do not reflect Total Quality Management [TQM] principles or other more current approaches to administration.)

2 **Families** (The Criteria reflect a parent involvement/parent education approach and do not reflect a family-centered approach or TQM principles.)

3 **Licensing status** (Clarity is needed regarding programs' required compliance with local regulations.)

4 **Assessment of children** (The Criteria are not congruent with other NAEYC positions. We also have encountered situations where programs test children for entry.)

5 **Continuity of care** (The Criteria address continuity over a day, but not over time; we have seen programs that shift children every six months, especially infants and toddlers, requiring too many transitions.)

6 **More specificity on child abuse prevention** and on existing criteria (cushioning surfaces, group size, school-age "touching," etc.)

7 **Compensation of staff.** For several years, we have been asked to include criteria about staff salaries in accreditation. However, antitrust regulations prohibit accreditation systems from establishing such standards, which would be interpreted as price-fixing. Nevertheless, research shows consistently that staff compensation and turnover are strong predictors of quality for children. The Criteria need to reflect this knowledge in some way without standardizing salaries.

Commission Decision Procedures Modified to Improve Efficiency

IN THE PAST, one of the most frequent complaints about NAEYC's accreditation system was the inordinate amount of time required to receive an accreditation decision following a validation visit. One reason decisions took so long was that staff reviewed Program Descriptions before and after Commission meetings to ensure consistency with prior decisions of other Commissions. At their May 1994 meeting, the Academy Advisory Panel discussed this issue at length in terms of what is gained by the Commission decision process (credibility was found to be the primary outcome) and what is lost (efficiency and service to our clients). The panel recommended that staff develop a plan for improving the decision process that would continue to incorporate a combination of staff and Commission input to remain credible, while also improving efficiency and service. This plan was developed and approved by the Governing Board in July 1994.

Academy implements new decision process

During 1995, the Academy piloted new procedures to improve the quality, consistency, and efficiency of Commission decisions. All decisions are reviewed by staff commissioners (qualified early childhood professionals who meet monthly in teams of three), and then a random sample of these decisions (ranging from 33% to 50% of the total) are reviewed by external teams of commissioners meeting monthly. The external commissioners function as an audit to ensure the reliability and validity of staff reviews.

The new decision process has greatly increased efficiency. Virtually all programs receive a decision within 4 to 5 weeks (some within 2 weeks) following their validation visit. Previously Commission meetings were held every 8 to 10 weeks, so programs often waited 10 to 12 weeks for a decision.

Accreditation decisions continue to be based on professional judgment, rather than a point system. The quality and consistency of the decisions remain high. Agreement between internal and external commissioners averages above 95%. When differences have occurred, they have been easily corrected, such as when programs are deferred by staff commissioners but accredited by external commissioners. The deferral rate continues to remain relatively high, approximately 25% on average.

Commissioners praise new system

Feedback from external commissioners has been very positive. One commissioner wrote after her experience, "No doubt the new Commission process is a vast improvement allowing more in-depth analysis of each program, a more efficient basis for consensus, and better use of commissioners' time—a developmental milestone for the Academy." Another wrote, "I returned from the meeting feeling rejuvenated. The accreditation process is so well developed. I found this new decision-making procedure very appropriate and efficient."

The Academy Advisory Panel served as commissioners during the May 1995 meeting and were very favorable about the new Commission decision procedures. They found the process much more efficient and effective and believe that the integrity and credibility of the system is well maintained.

Accrediting Multisite Organizations

Programs occupying different locations, even if administered by a central agency, must apply and be considered separately for accreditation, except under specific conditions where multisite organizations may be considered as one program. To be considered as one program for accreditation, a multisite program must have a central administration/one director, one budget, and sites must be housed no more than 10 to 15 miles or minutes apart.

Also, no more than three locations can be clustered, and the additional sites can serve no more than 60 children. Every site must be visited during the validation visit. If a program clusters its sites, completing one Program Description for all, it is possible that one site might keep the entire program from achieving accreditation if that site is not in substantial compliance with the Criteria.

Twas the Day Before NAEYC

by Tracey Nussvickel & Donna McGee

Twas the day before NAEYC
when all through the school,
not a teacher was calm,
or acting too cool.
Nerves were on end.
Teachers were uptight.
Totally exhausted and
not sleeping all night.
Children in places,
teachers on toes.
Getting all ready to give it a go.
When in walked NAEYC,
what a nerve-racking sight.
But much to our surprise,
it all went alright!

This was found on the bulletin board at the Shady Oaks Private School and Child Care during its validation visit last December.

10th Year of Accreditation Is a Time for Reflection

1995 marks the beginning of the 10th year of operation of NAEYC accreditation. We have learned a great deal during the last decade and have seen tremendous changes in our field during that time, some of which are at least in part attributable to accreditation. For example, we no longer hear the question, What is quality child care? NAEYC was fortunate to have the opportunity to conduct an invitational think tank conference on accreditation in September 1995 funded by the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation. This meeting provided an opportunity to take a thoughtful and critical look at the accreditation system at this historic point. This conference at Cantigny, outside Chicago, provided considerable data (14 papers prepared for the background materials that NAEYC will publish in 1996) and new analysis from which to evaluate our past and plan for our future.

NAEYC accreditation is a marketing tool

NAEYC's accreditation system is the most direct way that the Association can influence the quality of care and education that children receive in group programs. The accreditation standards serve as benchmark standards for state licensing of child care programs, state departments of education prekindergarten programming, and various kinds of funding and contracting purposes. In some areas of the country where a critical mass of programs have achieved accreditation, NAEYC accreditation is a valuable marketing tool and greatly coveted. Public awareness about accreditation is increasing gradually but significantly; for example, Judson Culbreth of *Working Mother* magazine announced on the *Today* show recently that parents should look for NAEYC accredited programs when choosing child care. In June, NAEYC developed a video segment for the cable television series, *Better Parenting*, on choosing child care that features NAEYC accreditation. The segment includes interviews with Jerlean Daniel and Barbara Willer and is being broadly aired this fall to encourage public awareness of accreditation.

Accreditation has grown rapidly during its first decade of existence. More than 4,300 programs are now accredited, placing NAEYC among the largest accrediting bodies in the country. Accrediting bodies that are larger tend to serve sectors in which accreditation is essentially mandatory for third-party payments, such as hospitals or colleges. Comparison of activity during 1993–94 and 1994–95 indicates that the number of self-study orders held steady (a small increase of approximately 100 programs) while validation visit requests increased by 18%.

Looking ahead

In recent years, the greatest growth has resulted from third-party-funded projects through block grant funds, foundation/corporation funded projects, and state departments of education. Accreditation support may diminish with changes and cuts in block grants for child care. However, accreditation activity may actually increase as the country moves toward greater decentralization and less government regulation. Accreditation is, by definition, a private, voluntary system of regulation which is presumably less expensive than government regulation. The antiregulatory trend in the country has important implications for NAEYC accreditation. If more states and other entities move toward reliance on private accreditation, demand on the system will increase. Accreditation is designed to build on, not replace the regulatory function of licensing.

In many ways, NAEYC has achieved its major goals regarding accreditation. The system is relatively well known, respected, and valued. There is a growing body of research that substantiates the relationship between accreditation and positive outcomes for children. This is the good news; but there is also related bad news. As NAEYC accreditation increases in value, our actions and decisions become high stakes. The higher the stakes, the more likely programs are to seek accreditation for marketing value alone thus leading to less time spent on self-study and improvement, higher rates of deferral, an increased number of complaints from programs and parents, and, to put it bluntly, more cheating. Thus, the integrity, consistency, and fairness of the procedures become even more important.

The Academy is now the largest department at NAEYC with 13 full-time staff members and several part-time assistants. (In fact, the Academy is almost as large as NAEYC was when accreditation development began in 1980.)

Many NAEYC members contribute their time and professional expertise to make accreditation possible. We have a large cadre of volunteer validators and commissioners, many of whom have been involved with the system since its inception. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to these professionals who work so hard to improve the quality of care and education for young children in group programs.

Understanding Quality and the Cultural Context

ONE OF THE MOST frequently asked questions about accreditation is how to interpret the criteria related to cultural diversity (specifically **A-4** and **B-7h**). We also receive frequent complaints about the way validators interpret these criteria during visits. Even when we do not receive complaints, staff note Program Descriptions in which validators comment on the number of White dolls or the number of pictures of African Americans in the classroom in explaining their ratings. When validators evaluate a programmatic concept as complex as cultural sensitivity in a seemingly insensitive way (by focusing on the outward manifestations of culture or attempting to quantify diversity), it is not surprising that differences of opinion result.

In thinking about these criteria, we first need to deepen our understandings of the concept of culture. Gyda Chud of Vancouver, British Columbia, offers a helpful principle to remember: "Culture in the classroom is not a topic that you have the privilege of adding or deleting. Culture is always present whenever humans interrelate with one another."

As Carol Brunson Phillips explains, "Culture is a set of rules for behavior. You cannot see culture because you cannot see the rules; you can only see the products of culture, in the sense that you can see the behaviors the rules produce. Yet, cultural rules do not cause behavior, they influence people to behave similarly, in ways that help them to understand each other. It is by understanding your culture's rules that you know how to greet a person younger than you, older than you, a friend, a stranger . . . These rules give meaning to all the events and experiences of life."

At times, the Academy receives irate calls or letters from program directors whose validators missed the fact that the staff members share the same cultural (and maybe even linguistic) backgrounds with the children, thus strengthening the cultural continuity of children's experiences from home to program. In this case, validators may have looked only for artificial, outward manifestations of cultural diversity—such as pictures or holidays—and missed the deep structure of cultural rules that make the experience for children culturally meaningful and comfortable.

Culture in the classroom is not a topic that you have the privilege of adding or deleting.

Because the issue of cultural diversity is complex and the risks of offending people are real, some programs attempt to solve the issue by avoiding the topic altogether. We have heard of programs that don't celebrate any holidays (or even children's birthdays!) and justify this decision on the grounds of NAEYC accreditation standards. Nothing in NAEYC accreditation Criteria could justify such actions. In fact, our standards call for curriculum and teaching that support the development of positive self-concept in children. Is there any more meaningful manifestation of a preschooler's identity than his or her birthday? In fact, birthday celebrations can be thought of as part of "kid culture," that adults should respect. Programs need to support children's development of their own individual and cultural identity, while also helping children develop respect for other people whose experiences or values may be different from their own.

One strategy that may be helpful in resolving these conflicts is to realize that **A-4** and **B-7h** actually encompass at least four goals of culturally appropriate, anti-bias educational practice. These goals may receive more or less emphasis in an individual program depending on the composition of the group. Louise Derman-Sparks describes these curriculum goals in more detail in NAEYC's book, *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children, Volume 1:*

(Goal 1) To foster each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity. The first goal is a goal of all early childhood education that is addressed differently depending on the individual children in the group. For example, if the program is composed of all African Americans or Native Americans, groups whose identity and cultures have been historically oppressed in the United States, the goal of encouraging pride in self-identity may be the most important goal of the curriculum. For this reason, a Head Start program in Alabama that is 100% African American may choose to have only Black baby dolls available or the curriculum in a child care center in Arizona may be designed to promote Navajo culture and language.

(Goal 2) To foster children's comfortable, empathetic interaction with diversity among people. As Gyda Chud states, "Children need to feel pride, but not superiority in their own cultural identity." If the group is all European Americans whose identity

continued on page 7

Directors: Know Your Rights

ALL TOO OFTEN we receive complaints about validation visits from directors who were unaware of their rights in the validation process. The validation visit (and especially the exit interview) is designed to provide an opportunity for directors to describe how their program complies with specific criteria or how the individuals in the program interpreted the Criteria.

The purpose of making validation decisions is to ensure that the Program Description is as accurate as possible. The validator's role is to succinctly, but objectively, record the results of the discussion of nonvalidated criteria in the Program Description. We recognize that not everyone interprets the Criteria the same way. When nonvalidated criteria result due to different interpretations, the validators' role is not to convince the director that their interpretation is "correct," but rather to report both the interpretations to the Commission.

Before the discussion of nonvalidated criteria begins, validators should explain to the director what nonvalidated means and that the reason for the discussion of nonvalidated criteria is to provide the Commission with information that will help commissioners make the accreditation decision.

Nonvalidated does **not** mean "not good" or "not accredited." For example, a program could have nonvalidated criteria because the validator rated the program higher then they rated themselves, showing growth since the self-study was completed. By the same token a program could have many validated criteria and still not be accredited because the validator and the program agree on ratings of a one (not met) or two (partially met). Nonvalidated means that there is a difference in the validator's observation and the program's rating. Nonvalidated criteria should be viewed as an opportunity to personalize the Program Description and offer additional information that will assist the Commission in making the accreditation decision.

CULTURE *continued from page 6*

is positively supported by the messages of the larger culture, then the goal of promoting respect for diversity may become more important. For example, if the population of the geographic area is homogeneous and the program serves only European American children, it may be even more important for these children to see positive images of people from diverse groups. In this case, the goal may be to ensure that lack of direct contact with individuals from other cultural or racial groups does not translate into feelings of superiority toward others.

In achieving a multicultural goal, we must be careful not to commit the error of implementing a "tourist" curriculum, acting as though other cultures are exotic places to visit, by focusing on holidays, food, clothing, or other artifacts of culture. For example, one director in New England was justifiably disturbed when a validator complimented a teacher for celebrating Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday; the director saw this activity as inappropriate because there were no Mexican-American children in the class and the celebration was essentially meaningless for the group.

(Goal 3) To foster each child's critical thinking about bias. This goal can be addressed throughout the curriculum when teachers focus children's attention on and support their ability to think critically about the biased messages in our society. Of course, materials and activities should be selected to avoid stereotyping of any group, but when bias is apparent the teacher can help children analyze it. For example, if the teacher reads a book that shows an aged grandmother in a rocking chair, she can engage the children in a discussion about the active grandmas they know to try to counter a stereotype of the elderly.

(Goal 4) To foster each child's ability to stand up for herself and for others in the face of bias. This goal is directly related to an important early childhood goal—fostering social skills—but it goes a step beyond. Of course, adults need to teach children to treat other people fairly themselves, but our world also needs people who intervene when others are treated badly. Engaging in activities that counter biases is a goal that is most appropriate for older children, but it is never too early to help children become aware of the hurtful effects of bias against any group and the need to speak up against it.

Because every program will have its own goals and needs in attempting to achieve these or other goals related to demonstrating respect for cultural diversity, the accreditation process cannot dictate any one correct way to fully meet the criteria. Our goal is that program personnel and parents will engage in a dialogue about cultural differences, values, and goals and that administrators and teachers will thoughtfully examine their practices in relation to these goals.

Validator Training and Retraining Planned

Validator training will be held in conjunction with several conferences this winter and spring. If you were previously trained as a validator and need to be retrained (retraining is required every three years) or would like to become a validator, you may apply to attend one of these trainings. Qualifications for validators include (1) at least a baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, (2) experience working with young children in a group program, (3) experience administering an accredited early childhood program, (4) the flexibility to conduct at least three validation visits per year. In selecting individuals to be trained, priority is given to individuals from accredited programs. For information, please contact the Academy.

January 25, 1996—Chicago AEYC
March 7, 1996—Sacramento, California AEYC
March 20, 1996—NCCCC, Kansas City, Missouri
March 21 & 22, 1996—Massachusetts Department of Education
April 17, 1996—Midwest AEYC, Lincoln, Nebraska

NAEYC Resources Help Improve Quality

Several new inexpensive resources that relate directly to accreditation Criteria are available from NAEYC

New videotape series—

Caring for Our Children

NAEYC #820, $75 (sold only as a set of 6 videos)

NAEYC is proud to introduce an important new training resource designed to ensure the health and safety of all young children, including children with disabilities, in out-of-home settings—child care centers, schools, and family child care homes. This series is brought to you by the American Academy of Pediatrics and NAEYC, with generous support provided by the AT&T Family Care Development Fund—a joint project of AT&T, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The videos are based on the book, *Caring for Our Children—National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*, a project of the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. This six-part series is ideal for orienting new staff or volunteers in programs or for in-service or preservice preparation of professionals. Each video is 30 minutes long with convenient spots to stop and discuss or review. The series includes six videotapes and a set of handout masters to be duplicated for training purposes. The AT&T Family Care Development Fund fully supported the development of these training videos enabling NAEYC to offer them at the low price of $75 for the complete set. At this price, every early childhood program in America should be able to own this valuable resource.

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by J. Berkwitt and D. Flis. NAEYC #908, $5

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